DO TELL

A COLLECTION OF MONOLOGUES

BY

NOBLE MAY

Pauline Hope Buttner 75

DO TELL

or

Over the Telephone and Otherwise

A Collection of Readings and Monologues

By

NOBLE MAY

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY
1925

BANNER PLAY BUREAU
1061 MARKET ST.
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

COPYRIGHT, 1925, BY WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY

All rights reserved

Made in U. S. A.

The sketches which served as a basis for these monologues were originally published in the *Chicago Daily News*. The author takes pleasure in acknowledging the courtesy of the *News* in permitting her to make use of the material in this way.

This little book is affectionately dedicated to my sister

LUCINDA MAY

whose assistance as collaborator and critic has been invaluable in its preparation :: ::

CONTENTS

The Reducing Game	7
In the Day Coach	12
At the Matinee	16
News Gathering	23
The Bath Hour	30
Listening In	36
You Never Know Till You Find Out	41
Do Dreams Come True?	46
A Hurried Call	51
Grandma's Foiled Again	58
Christmas on the Way	63
Her Aristocratic Foot	70
The Eighth Guest	77
Fixing the Details	84
Choosing Presents	90
Jim's Granny	97
The Development of Sadie	102
George Turned the Tables	108
The Clouds Roll By	114
The Case of the Blonde	119

CONTENTS

THE SECRET - - - - - - 125
WEDDING BELLS - - - - - 131
BREAKING THE NEWS - - - - 136
ON THE BOUNDING BILLOWS - - - 142
RANK INJUSTICE - - - - - 147
HER BUSY DAY - - - - - 152
TRAVEL TALK - - - - - 159
THE MUSIC LOVER - - - - 166
A WILY WIDOW - - - - - 173
GOING TO VISIT PA'S FOLKS - - - 180

THE REDUCING GAME

(Miss Pearl McQuate *speaks into the telephone.* Pearl *is a wholesome looking person. In spite of the long, straight lines of her modish frock, her appearance does not lead to the surmise that she is deprived of any of the regulation "three squares" a day.*)

"'Lo, kid. That you?

"Just marvelous. How's yourself and Jim and everybody?

"Absoolotly. Say, darlin', listen. I got sumpin' to tell you.

"Oh, nothin' much—just about me startin' to reduce and everything. Honest, girlie, I bet you croak when I tell you. (*Chuckles half-confusedly.*)

"Well, I was just kinda—you know—over to the grocery store a coupla weeks ago and while I was there I thought I might's well get weighed and all, see? So I done it. And, say, cutie, listen. What ya think them scales says?

"Go on! (*Protesting laughingly, but*

with some real alarm in her voice.) You're coo-coo! I bet I don't look like I weighed nowheres near that much ——

(*Placated.*) "Oh, that's all right. I ain't sore. But, say, sweetie, lookit. I did get a kinda—you know—jolt and everything when I looked at them scales. Absoolotly. So when I gets home I tells Ma how I come pretty near passin' out when I seen them old scales and how I was all for—you know—cuttin' down on the eats and gettin' some swell exercises with the—you know—phonograph and everything.

(*Very earnestly.*) "Righty. And, say, old top, listen. The first thing I done was to cut out the sweet stuff—candy and like that. And the very night I quit eatin' those sort of things Ma she had a swell cherry pie for supper and I didn't never touch it and so I was kinda—you know—sore at the world anyway. And then the fellow that lives up-stairs of us he comes volplanin' down with the swellest box of candy! Honest, darling, (*Feelingly.*) when I gets a close-up of them chawcluts I pretty near fades out the pitcher.

"Sure! I never touched a one of 'em. And say, old thing, listen. Me bein' kinda

sore, I guess I kinda acted—you know—ugly to Fred, see? Anyway, pretty soon he says he guessed I wasn't feelin' very well and he guessed he better beat it. And that's what he done, see?

(*Very seriously.*) "And, say, girlie, listen. That's how it went all them coupla weeks. I was so sore all the time 'bout nothin' that no person couldn't pass no remark to me—it didn't make no difference what it was—without me wantin' to bounce a brick off their bean, see?

"Well, last evenin' Fred he blows in again and after we visited awhile he says reel kinda in earnest, 'Say, kid,' he says, 'I can't help from wonderin' what's eatin' you these days,' he says. 'You're so awful kinda different to what you was,' he says. 'Before you was all the time laughin' and now you're all the time hollerin' about somepin', see?' he says.

"And say, kid, lookit. (*With a shamefaced little giggle.*) When he says that I just busts out and bawls.

"Sure, I did. He made me. And, say, old dear, listen. (*The giggle becomes a happy gurgle.*) He—you know—Fred, he thinks it's awful comical me thinkin' I'm too fat. He pretty near laughed

IN THE DAY COACH

(MRS. DOOLITTLE *enters the day coach. She holds a small child on one arm. She carries as many parcels as her hands and arms will accommodate. She pushes and tows two other children with her into a double seat. They also are laden with parcels.* MRS. DOOLITTLE *begins to stow away the bundles in the overhead rack, on the seats, under the seats, etc., as she speaks.*)

"Now, you Harold, you come right back here and set down beside of Kitty an' for the land's sakes keep still for half a jiffy.

"Because I tell you to. I guess that's reason enough. I never see sech a set o' young ones for askin' why every time a person turns 'round. Seems like you don't use your intelligence no more'n a rabbit, not any of you. Even if you are my own children I'm obliged to say it.

(*Leans forward and shakes one of the children by the arm.*) "Kitty, you let

Harold set there like I told him to, an' don't you keep pokin' him like that.

" There, now, didn't I tell you he'd be hittin' you back if you didn't quit? It's your own fault.

(*Snatches at the other child and drags him back into seat.*) " Now, you Harold, don't you go runnin' over there again. Didn't I just tell you to set down there beside of Kitty an' to stay set? Ain't that just like all my youngsters? There ain't a one of 'em knows what it is to mind a word I say. It's enough to drive a person crazy. Look at them nice little girls over there. Why can't you kids act like that?

(*Snatches at the other child and pulls her back.*) " Now, you Kitty, you come back here. Where you goin' anyway?

" Well, you don't need no drink. You come on back here an' set down.

" Well, I guess I do know whether you need a drink or not. I never see sech sassy young ones. Now you come on back an' set down an' I'll tell you when you want a drink an' not a minute before. An' don't you holler at me like that! Sech a bunch o' youngsters—you ain't got any more bringin' up!

(*Takes off hat and begins to fan self*

with it, then sits up suddenly and glares at child opposite.) "Now, you Harold, what you got in your hand? Did you take something off of Kitty? I bet you did. You give it right back to her.

"Well, how do I know it ain't hers if you don't open your hand and show it to me. You open it like I say. I never did see sech kids, always askin' why like they didn't know a thing on earth.

"It don't make no difference whether it's yours or whether it ain't. You show me anyway.

(*Indignantly.*) "Nothin' but your handkerchief! Well, for the land's sakes! If you ain't the limit—gettin' me all worked up and nervous for nothin' at all. (*Fans self violently.*)

"Well, how could I know? It could just as easy 'a' been something else.

(*Leans back, then bounces forward again.*) "Now, you Kitty, take your fingers outa that lunch box.

"No, you ain't either, hungry. I guess I'd oughta know whether you're hungry or not.

"Now, don't get sassy an' answer me back like that. You set right down and take your hands off that lunch box. Look

at them nice little girls over there. Why can't you act like they do?

" No, you can't have no banana. They ain't but a couple of 'em left an' I got to save them in case the baby wakes up an' gets to cryin'. I got to have something to make him quit. Land knows I got enough to get me all upset without havin' the baby get to yellin'.

(*Leans back, begins to fan, then bounces forward and pushes children impatiently into the aisle.*) " Well, for the land's sake, go an' get a drink, then, and quit your fussin'. An' maybe it would be kinda nice if you was to stop and play with them little girls on your way. Look, their ma's readin' to 'em out of a book. You and Harold go over and see what it is, after you get your drink an' I'll just lay down on the seat an' take a nap. Land knows I need a little rest."

(*Deposits baby on opposite seat, makes a pillow of a pile of bundles, draws feet up and goes to sleep.*)

AT THE MATINEE

(*The last member of the matinee party which was to assemble fifteen minutes before time for the performance to begin is scrambling to her seat just as the curtain rises.*)

" Oh, please excuse me (*To two fattish ladies who are propping up on their scarcely distinguishable laps an assortment of handbags, hats and opera glasses, which slide off in various directions as the newcomer crowds past them.*), I'm awfully sorry. Oh, please let me help you pick them up. (*Her head comes into violent contact with that of the lady nearest to her as she stoops to recover some of the fallen articles.*) Oh, please excuse me. I'm afraid I hurt you. I'm so sorry.

(*Sinking into seat beside her friends.*) " They don't seem to like my walking on their feet, but I can't help it. I'm terribly sorry to come in late, but I waited and waited for Pauline ——

(*As she glances along the row of seats occupied by her friends her mouth and*

eyes open, and she leans forward in amazement.)

" Well, if there isn't Pauline this minute, calmly sitting there devouring chocolates. Why, Pauline, you old thing, you! Girls, hold me. Don't let me get away from you. I'm going to kill her! Don't let me struggle from your grasp. I waited twenty perfectly good minutes for that—that —— Oh, I know I'm going to slay her. I can feel it coming on.

" Yes, I heard those people saying ' Sh-h-h,' but I've simply got to explode a little.

(*Begins to struggle to get out of her coat.*) " Here, hold my bag while I take my coat off. Oh, dear, there go my opera glasses!

" Why, under the seat, of course. Not that one—the one that fat man's sitting in.

" Well, I can't help it if he's fat. I'm not responsible for it. I guess he didn't hear me, anyway.

" Oh, thank you ever so much. Now what did I do with my handkerchief? Hand me my coat, please. What on earth did you put it over there for?

" Thank you ever so much.

" Why of course I'm going to take my hat off just as soon as ——

(*Takes off hat slowly and pins it carefully to back of the seat in front of her. Fluffs up her hair, takes out powder compact and begins to touch up her complexion.*)

" Yes, I'll take a chocolate in a minute, but I want to find out why Pauline didn't wait for me, the old wretch!

(*Impatiently.*) " Of course I didn't get there right on time. I thought you'd be late—you always are. Well, then I waited five minutes, and then I thought I'd better wait ten, and so I waited twenty, and here you were all the time, just stuffing yourself with chocolates!

" I don't suppose you do consider it your fault, but if you'd only even left word at the box office ——

" Oh, you did?

" No, of course I didn't ask there. How could I know ——

" Oh, let's not talk about it any more.

(*Adjusts opera glasses and turns her attention for the first time to the stage.*) " Is that man the hero? Kind of funny

looking. But then the girl's nothing to go crazy about.

" Do give me a chocolate. I'm famishing, and I can't seem to get my mind on the play anyway. Maybe a chocolate will settle me.

" Oh, my goodness, what did you give me a squashy one for? I ——

" Why, of course it did! All over me! I suppose I'll have to have my dress and my gloves cleaned and they just came back day before yesterday ——

" My dear, I never said you meant to do it. Of course it was an accident, but it's just as annoying as if it had been planned from the beginning of time.

(*To usher.*) " What?

" How ridiculous! I wasn't talking loud enough to disturb anyone. You're very impertinent.

(*To friends.*) " I shall report her. I don't like girl ushers, anyway. They're always so officious.

" My dear, isn't that a perfect peach of a gown? I'm going to make my new *crêpe de chine* just like it. Can you see how the sleeves are made? Give me the glasses. Yes, I could do it perfectly easily. It's just draped. There's no real hang to it at

all. Give me a piece of paper while I make a little sketch of it.

" Ask Gertrude if she has a piece.

" No, not your glasses, a piece of paper.

" Ask Sally if she has some.

" No. No. Not a program—a piece of paper that I can draw on. Oh, aren't they dense?

(*To usher.*) " I wish you would attend to your own business. I was speaking in a very low voice—I couldn't possibly have —— (*To friends.*) I shall certainly report that girl. I don't like girl ushers anyway. I think a woman is entirely out of place in such a position.

" Do give me another chocolate. Why, you old meany, you. You've eaten every one of the squashy ones.

" What if I did? All I said was you should have told me it was squashy. When you know how to eat them—just pop them in whole and eat them afterwards.

" Oh, sweetheart, can you see how the trimming is put on around the neck? If that woman down there in front would only sit still a minute—I'm going to ask the usher to ask her ——

(*To usher.*) " Usher! Just go down there and ask that lady in the third row—

the one in the green dress—if she can't sit a little more quietly.

"What? Well, I don't see why you can't ask her. I'm sure it's your duty to see that the patrons of the theatre are not annoyed ——

(*To friends.*) "Isn't that absurd? What is she here for, I'd like to know.

"Do you know, I can't hear a word they say, scarcely. I think the way the actors and actresses enunciate these days is perfectly inexcusable. Now, some of the older actors, don't you know—you can tell the minute they open their mouths.

"Isn't that evening coat the most gorgeous thing you ever saw? Of course it wouldn't do for the daytime, but by artificial light it's simply stunning.

"Oh, I must tell you about that model I got to drape my gowns on. My dear, you can't imagine how it simplifies things. I can make anything with it—literally anything!

"Oh, is that the end? Well, of all the stupid, uninteresting plays! I must say it seems perfectly silly to me. I'll confess I couldn't make head or tail out of it.

"Why of course I'm glad I came, honey. I've had a perfectly dear time,

and that one gown she had on in the first act was worth the price of admission. (*Struggling into her coat.*) Now, do let's go over to Whitestone's, girls, and have a cup of tea and some of those wonderful little cakes. I'm simply starving to death."

NEWS GATHERING

(MRS. CATLIN, *the visiting dressmaker, arrives to begin her day's work at* MRS. MILDMAY'S. *As she comes into the room her sharp eyes dart about it like those of a curious, malicious magpie. She speaks in a high, nasal monotone.*)

" Good-morning, Mis' Mildmay. You see I'm right on the minute. I always get to a place on time and work till the end. Even if the folks I work for are mean that's no reason why I should be.

(*Takes off coat and hat, opens hand-bag and draws out a black sateen apron, which she ties about her waist.*)

" So you've got everything ready for me! Now ain't that grand! I always say I like to come here even if you don't have such handsome goods. There's some folks, you know,—that Mis' Blake, for instance, her that lives over on Cherry Avenue—well, the goods she gets is

simply the finest there is, and you'd think when you'd make her something she thought it was the swellest she ever seen, and then the first thing you know she's going 'round behind your back saying you made a botch of it—just as two-faced as you please. Now I know you'll say what you think right to my face, and that's the way I like folks to act.

(*Takes up some folds of material from table, shakes it, pulls it, and holds it off at a distance, looking at it disparagingly.*)

" Say, that's reel pretty goods at a little distance, and it don't look so awful poor when you get close to it. Just a little kind of coarse. It's the living image of the goods I made up into a little hack dress for Mis' Bales, her that lives over on the boulevard and has a couple of automobiles and a chauffeur and a footman and goodness knows how many girls. Seems like the place is always full of 'em, and for all the times I been there seems like there's always new faces. They say she and her husband don't get along at all, and he don't come home early hardly ever if he can help it. Well, I was just saying I made her a dress out of some

goods that looked just like that there you've got just for her to kind of lie 'round the house in, and you've no idea how pretty it made up.

(*Tosses goods on table.*)

"Oh, you was going to have it made kind of fancy for a reception dress? (*Patronizingly.*) Well, now, I think that'll be just fine. Of course this Mis' Bales had hers made reel plain, just some little reel Irish lace medallions and inserting, so I think if you get some reel handsome, stylish trimming to put on it ——

"Oh, you was planning to use the trimming you had on your last winter's reception dress! (*Takes up trimming and eyes it, squinting, head on one side.*) Well, now, ain't that a good idea! I'd a whole lot rather work for folks that lives within their means than them that tries to put on a lot of style and then hasn't got the means to keep it up.

(*Lets trimming drop on table.*)

"Now this woman I was working for before I come here—Mis' Brown's her name—she lives a little way down the street. Oh you know her, do you? Well,

ain't it killing the way she tries to put on style? They say she don't give her servants enough to eat. The last time I was there she didn't give me a thing for lunch but bread and butter and a chop and a potato and tea and some kind of sauce and a little bit of a piece of cake. Now that's what I call downright mean. Skimp yourself on food if you want to, but folks that work ought to have their three square meals a day.

(*Takes up fashion book and begins to flip over leaves, stops and indicates an illustration.*)

" Seems to me this style would be kind of pretty on you if you wasn't quite so stout. (*Regards her client with a critical eye.*) I'm afraid 'twould look better on a slender person.

(*Hastily.*) " Oh my, no. I wouldn't call you so awful stout. I've seen ladies that was just as fleshy as you are wear that style of a garment.

(*Goes on turning over leaves.*)

" Seems like some folks can't make up their minds to settle down and remember they're getting older and fatter all the

time. It just kills me to see a lady wear things that's made in a style that's too youthful for them.

(*As though suddenly recollecting herself.*)

"Of course nobody would ever think for a minute that you was as old as you are, and you don't look a bit too stout—only seeing I've been sewing for you so long I kind of notice you change quite a bit from time to time.

(*Looks from the book to her customer and back again to the book doubtfully.*)

"Well, if you reelly want that style I guess I can fix it so's it'll look all right on you. I always say if folks could just see themselves what a good thing it would be. Now there's a lady I worked for—her name's Mis' Myers. She's just about as stout as you are. She had some goods something like this, only it was finer, and nothing would do but she must have a lot of frills and things on it, and, my, she looked bunchy when she had it on. I nearly died laughing when I got away.

(*Begins to spread out paper pattern*

and lay material on it, her mouth full of pins.)

"That Mis' Myers don't get along very well with her husband, either. She had a fierce fight with him over the 'phone the last time I was there. I couldn't quite make out what it was about. You know how hard it is because you don't know what the person at the other end is saying. Well, the way she talked to him! I was saying to Mis' Spencer, that I worked for the next day—she knows Mis' Myers reel well—I told her it was a good thing it was me that was there to hear it instead of some of these tattling dressmakers that would have gone and tattled it all over. Mis' Spencer looked kind of funny. I've heard that she and her husband fight like cats and dogs when they're alone together though they're just too sweet for anything when they're out anywheres together.

(*Searches in bag for tape measure.*)

"Well, I guess I better take your measure now! (*Takes out tape measure and unrolls it.*) Oh, did the girl say your husband was calling you on the 'phone?

Well, I guess I better take my tape measure in there and sit while you're talking, so's I can begin to measure you soon's you're through."

(*Hurries out after* MRS. MILDMAY, *hopeful of getting on the trail of some interesting family jar with which to regale to-morrow's client.*)

THE BATH HOUR

(DONALD *has been called in from the street by his unfeeling mother. The sound of water running into the bathtub adds poignancy to the situation.*)

"Aw, mother, do I have to come in now? Say, gee, it ain't eight o'clock yet. It ain't anywheres near eight. It ain't more'n seven or eight minutes to. Aw, say!

"Well, can't you wait just a minute? I got to tell the fellows I can't come out again.

"Well, I didn't mean to be sassy. I just meant I had to tell the fellows I couldn't come out again. You always said yourself it wasn't polite not to tell folks good-night and everything.

"Well, I guess I just did it because you always try to make me be so awful polite. I don't care about it. I just hate being polite.

"Honest, do I have to take a bath again to-night? Honest to goodness, it makes me sick! I took a bath last night.

Seems like I don't never do a single thing in this world but take baths! I can't hardly ever come in this house a minute but I hear that old faucet running and then next thing I have to go and take a old bath.

(*The bath begins.*)

" Ouch, mother, that's too hot! I bet that scalded my leg so I can't go to school to-morrow or Sunday school on Sunday.

" Well, I can't go if I get my leg all boiled when you make me take a bath.

" Well, even if you and dad do take 'em every day I don't see why I should. Seems to me like that's enough baths for one house. I bet when I get married I won't take a bath every day. I won't ever take any!

" Ouch, mother, you hurt my sore place! It's awful sore. Please don't touch it again.

" Ouch, that's my other sore place! That one's the sorest one I've got.

" Well, I guess I have got more than one. I've got more'n a dozen or two. And they're awful sore, too. They ain't just those little baby sore places that some fellows make such a fuss about. It seems

like sometimes you just pick out my sore places to wash the hardest.

" I don't see why you don't let me take my own baths, anyway. All the other fellows take their own baths. I bet I'm the only fellow in the crowd that his mother baths him.

" Ouch, mother, you're just freezing me turning all that cold water on me. I bet I'll have a awful cold to-morrow, and if I do I ain't going to school, because when you have a cold at school the teacher always opens the windows and lets 'em blow a draft on you and it pretty near kills you.

" Ouch, mother, I don't see why you got to dig into my ear like that! Seems like you want to be one of them tortures we read about in school. They did awful stunts to the folks they caught, but I bet they didn't do anything worse than what you do to me right here every night.

" Well, I don't see any use of washing yourself all to pieces, anyway. I bet when I'm grown up I won't take baths all the time. Now, John Bolinski, now, he don't hardly ever take any baths. His mother don't hardly ever make him take any, and he looks just as *clean.* Well,

anyway, he looks clean enough. He looks just as clean as the other fellows do.

" Poor little fellow nothin'! I bet he has the dandiest time of any of us fellows. His mother don't ever hardly know where he is. He don't even have to go home to meals hardly ever. His mother just lets him go home with the other fellows any time he wants to without even asking. Only of course he has to go home to meals sometimes because the other fellows' mothers they don't like to have 'em bring him home too often, and he's got to eat sometimes. Any fellow has to eat sometimes.

" Now, if I get washed all to pieces like this to-night I'm not going to wash my neck and ears again in the morning. There's not a speck of sense washing all the time. A fellow don't hardly have time even to eat in this house, always having to have his neck and ears washed and taking baths and everything every time he turns 'round. It's no wonder I don't have time to get my lessons good. You was fussing just the other night because you said my marks wasn't good enough.

" It's no wonder I always have a cold, having to think about washing, washing,

washing all the time. You just wait till I'm twenty-one! I bet you see me quit fast enough then.

"And anyway, I read once in the paper how a fellow got drownded taking a bath in the bathtub. There was too much water in the tub and he had a fit or something and he just drownded and nobody heard him doing it, and it was awful.

"Well, if I was to get drownded I bet you'd feel kind of sorry. Maybe you wouldn't, though. It seems like you never do care how uncomfortable I am. Some mothers care, though. I bet John Bolinski's mother cares.

(*The bath ends.*)

"Say, mother, let me slide down the end of the tub a couple of times! Let me put a whole lot of soap on.

"Just once more. I didn't slide but three times and this makes four.

"Well, let me slide six times. Don't be such a tightwad. Honest, I didn't slide but four times. That was just a little bit of a slide. That won't count for more'n half a slide. Honest, I don't think it ought to count for more'n a quarter of a slide. Say, let me slide four more

quarters of slides six times and then I'll get out. Honest, those were just little teeny, weeny slides. They don't count for hardly more'n a eighth of a slide.

"Aw, mother, do I have to get out? Honest, mother, I don't see what makes you want to treat me so mean!"

LISTENING IN

(MRS. ROSENBERG, *a young, dark-eyed woman, with a care-worn and yet happy face, is fitting a dress to a visiting customer. The little dressmaker's mouth is full of pins, and she holds a pair of scissors with which she snips carefully.*)

"Ah, yes. You was speaking of the lady down-stairs of us. Y-e-es. She acts sometimes fierce yet. I used to think she was like that all the time, but now I think different already.

(*She puts in a pin carefully and regards the effect with her head on one side.*) "The panel, we will have it like this, eh? Yes, I think so. It will make you a little taller look. Not that you don't need to look more tall (*With a charming smile.*)—ach no—but these small cute-looking little ladies they often like to look bigger than what they are. And the big, tall ladies they don't want to look so big like they are. We don't never want what we got, no? (*Laughs cheerfully and tolerantly.*)

"Well, you know, that neighbor lady, when we come to this building first she was listening all the time onto to that telephone of us. She is on the same string, line—what you call it? Line, so? Well she all the time would be listening over my 'phone when I would try to talk to somebody. Und when I don't know she was knowing me, all the time she was knowing my business better than I done it myself. What do you know about that? Ach, such funny doings! What do I care what my neighbors are doing? I should worry, yes. But that neighbor lady, she care a great mooch. (*Puts in a few more pins, patting and smoothing deftly.*) Und so we have little tuckings across here like that, yes? You like that, what? Not too tight, you say? Oh, no, but joost nice und smooth, like this.

(*Sinks on knees—continues to pin, pat and smooth as she talks.*) "Well, it makes me so mad then that down-stairs lady was all the time listening on my telephone that I could knock the head off of her—but (*Nodding several times impressively.*) I don't. I will tell you. Wait a minute. What do I care if she is listening at my business? I should worry.

Let her listen on my string all the time if she wants that. Wait! I tell you why.

"There come a night when my little baby gets so sick. Ach, how I cried for scare! She was choking so—like this. Oh, fierce! Und I was so scared I could nothing do—und my husband, he was not knowing nothing. But (*Tolerantly.*) then he is joost a man. What else could you expect? I send him to the telephone to talk to the doctor and the doctor say he can come in a half a hour maybe, but just as soon as he can, anyway. Und the baby don't get no better und I was like a crazy woman und I hollers so, and my husband he goes pretty near crazy, too.

(*The busy hands stop a second in their task to dash away a reminiscent tear.*)

"Twice more he goes to the telephone again und the doctor comes not. Und then the last time he goes to the telephone und he was telling the doctor how the baby she was choking something fierce, und all of a sudden somebody hollered into the telephone:

"'You big crazy, don't you know that baby's got the croob? I can cure that

croob quicker than any doctor. You just hold your horses till I come.'

" What you t'ink? It was the downstairs lady which listens in the telephone. Und she comes running up the stairs und she quick put on the baby's neck some greases which she brings with her. Und she does other things which I was so scared I don't remember. Und she stays by us till pretty soon the baby's getting well again already. Und she don't choke any more—my little baby.

(*Smiling tenderly, she wipes her eyes on the corner of her work apron as she rises to her feet and regards her work from different points of view.*)

" We will have joost a little bias finishings around the sleeves und around the neck, yes? Und the skirt joost a little bigger so you can step up in the street car, and the belt a little narrow and the buttons sewed on and I think she will be completed, the little dress. Ach, such a cute little dress, and fits so goot! I never saw such a goot fitting little dress, I think.

(*Nods with satisfaction and begins to assist customer out of dress as she goes on.*)

" Und that neighbor lady when she go home that night I put me the arms around her neck and squeeze her neck tight und I thank her and I God bless her and I love her very mooch. (*She folds her arms and squeezes them together, in illustration, smiling through tears.*)

" Und now when she listens in my telephone und I get so mad all in a minute, I joost says to myself, 'Ach, you, suppose that neighbor lady had not never listened in your telephone. Then maybe you would not to have your little baby so cute now.' Und so I don't care if she listens, for I can't ever unlove that neighbor lady for what she done for my baby already.

(*Tolerantly.*) "Anyway, what do I care? I should worry. I don't never talk nothings in my telephone which I should have shame of talking."

(*Begins tidily to pick up scraps from the floor, smiling brightly at her client.*)

YOU NEVER KNOW TILL YOU FIND OUT

(Miss Gladys McGinn *has called up her friend* Miss Dorothy Byrne *on the telephone in order to make an important announcement.* Gladys *is quite youthful and far from unpleasant to look at. She is tingling with joyful excitement.*)

" Hello! That you, Dawr'thy? Hello, funny! Sure you are. You're a scream. How are you? That's fine.

" Just swell. Say, girlie, I got sumpin' to tell you.

" Say, kid, lookut. Where do you think we was the other day, me and Al?

" Oh, fade away, dearie. We ain't been to no dances I don't know when. Say, darling, listen. We was over to my sister's —her that lives—you know—kinda way out on the south side and got the coupla cute kids and everything.

" Sure. And, say, kid, lookut, ain't it funny how sometimes you think you're reel

well acquainted with folks and then you find out they're reel kinda different?

" Sure. And, say, you know I always had a kind of a funny feelin' about Al—him bein' such a nifty dresser and such a swell dancer and everything. I felt like he'd kinda think we was just a bunch of nuts havin' such a swell time out to my sister's just not doin' nothin', only playin' with the kids and kinda kiddin' each other along. So I just never said much about them livin' out there, nor the kids, nor nothin'.

" But, say, the other night when we was comin' out the movies I guess I kinda spoke sumpin' about the kids or sumpin', and right off Al he says: ' Say,' he says, ' I didn't know you had no kids in your bunch,' he says. ' Gee,' he says, ' I'm crazy about kids,' he says. ' How about you steerin' me out there Sunday and me givin' 'em the once over? ' he says.

" I says ' Sure, if you want to take your Sunday afternoon off fussin' around a bunch o' kids,' I says, ' it's your hard luck,' I says. ' But it's all right with me,' I says. ' I'll steer you,' I says.

" He give me a awful funny look. And that's why I says ain't it funny how you

don't reelly know nothin' about folks sometimes when you think you're reel well acquainted with 'em? Now, you take Al and me, see? I guess all the time he was thinkin' I wasn't nothin' but a kinda crazy slinker, and I thought he wasn't reel strong for nothin' but jazz and movies and like that.

" Well, Sunday afternoon we beat it out to my sister's all right, and it sure did look grand, though the house ain't no bigger'n a peanut and they ain't got even no talkin' machine nor nothin'. Hazul, that's my sister, she had on one of these here, now, kitchenette dresses and she looked reel cute and swell, and the kids was in their little rompers and their dad was down on the floor with 'em, see, kinda rough-housin' with 'em reel nice and gentle, and, say, it was cute's a bug's ear.

" Did Al fall for 'em? I'll say he did. And when supper time come and me and Hazul beat it out to the kitchen to get supper and I dressed up in one of Hazul's aperns like I always do and started to make the biscuits and Al was sittin' in the other room holdin' the littlest kid on his lap like it was the best thing he done, I seen him kinda give me the double O like

he hadn't never seen me reel good before. Say, kid, it made me feel awful funny. I'll say it did.

" And, say, kid, lookut. When supper was ready and we all begun to set down to the table and both the young ones asked couldn't they set next to me and everything like they always do Al he give me the once-over again.

" And after supper I beat it up-stairs like I always do when I'm there and put the kids to bed and then I come down and we cleaned up, the whole four of us. And then we set down and just kinda—you know—talked forth and back and had a swell time doin' nothin' like you do when there's just a bunch o' folks that's reel congenial and all and then Al and me beat it for home.

" And, say, kid, listen. Al he didn't say nothin' much till we got off the L and started to walk home, and then he says like—you know—I was sayin'—about how you guess you know all about folks and then you find out they're reel kinda different to what you thought they was and he says he hadn't never knew I was like he seen me acting that night.

" And say, kid, listen. I guess by the

time I got home I didn't know if I was laughin' or cryin'. It seemed so kinda—you know—crazy, neither of us not knowin' what each other reelly fell for hard—and, say, kid, wouldn't it make you die?

"And Al, he says if we hadn't of went out there like we done he sure would of put the soft pedal on askin' me. But we ain't goin' to wait so awful long, see. Maybe May or June.

"And say, kid, lookut. Ain't it—you know—funny how things happen sometimes? And swell? And, say, girlie, listen, Al he thinks so, too. That's what I 'phoned to tell you."

DO DREAMS COME TRUE?

(MISS MYRTLE MCGILLICUDDY, *just arrived at the office, proceeds at once to the really urgent business of the day, ringing up her friend* MISS GERTRUDE GALLOWAY.)

"'Lo, Gert, that you? How's the old thing?

"Spiffy's anything. (*Giggling nervously and fingering telephone cord.*) Say, girlie, I bet you pass out when I tell you what I dreamt the other night. Absolootly.

(*Runs finger around and around the base of the telephone transmitter, smiling reminiscently.*) "Oh, nothin' much. Just sumpin' kinda—you know—funny or sumpin'. Say, peaches, listen. Ja ever get thinkin' 'bout dreams an' everything—I mean like if a person would dream sumpin' 'bout another party that maybe they wouldn't have no more thoughts 'bout dreamin' of 'em than nothin' or not even—

you know—thinkin' of 'em much daytimes. Would you, now, maybe get tryin' to dope it out if there was some reason why that particler party should get dreamin' 'bout the other special party or sumpin', see? You know what I mean.

(*Trying to keep her voice unemotional.*) "Oh, I didn't mean nothin' particler. I was just thinkin'—— Say, cutie, listen. Did I broadcast to you that I was to a reel show already last Sat'day night, huh?

(*Admiringly.*) "Say, ain't you the cute little guesser! Sure it was Fred took me. An' say, old dear, listen. He sure is a knock-out when it comes to pickin' a good show, see? I'll tell the world. An' after the show was finished we was to a swell place an' had some swell ice-cream an' everything.

(*Emphatically.*) "You said a mouthful. An' say, dearie, listen. I bet you'll think it was terrible comical, but it was the —you know—same night I was to the show and all and after I was home and to sleep that I had this—you know—comical dream and all, see?

"You bet. An' say, dearie, listen. It was just like I said. After I'd went to sleep I kinda got dreamin'—you know—

'bout this that and the other—maybe some o' the folks to the offus an' everything and then some—you know—other folks—seemed like I didn't hardly know who they was or anything.

(*Giggles convulsively.*) "Comical! I'll say it was. An' then I started dreamin' reel plain about a certain party—Honest kid, I could see him—(*Hastily.*) I mean I could see the folks in my dream just like I was wide awake. Say, lookut, dearie, wasn't that a scream?

"Sure. An' say, sweetheart, listen. You'll just about croak when I tell you—honest, I just bet you do—but anyway I dreamt it just as plain as anything—it was like this, see? I dreamt I was goin' to—you know—get married. Absoolotly!

(*The giggles almost get the upper hand of* MYRTLE'S *vocal equipment for a moment.*)

"An' say, girlie, lookut. He—you know—my friend, he give me in my—you know—dream an' everything—a grand di'mond ring—platinum and all—an' ma she'd commenced startin' to make me some swell undergarments and we was thinkin' 'bout would we have a wedding or some-

thing, or just have his—you know—folks and—you know—my folks to the house and all.

(*Derisively but delightedly.*) "A-w-w, no. Fly away, little birdie! Any time I spill who it was I dreamt I was goin' to get married to! I'd be scared you'd—you know—tell the party.

"You bet. You know him reel well. I'll say you do. An' then there's a coupla reasons why I'd be scared to tell you. I bet anything if I was to tell you who it was you'd maybe—you know—tell Jim an' everything.

"Sure he does. They're awful kinda well acquainted. That's one o' the coupla reasons why I'm scared to—you know——

(*Earnestly.*) "Honest, you won't, kid? Well, then, give a guess.

(*Laughs excitedly.*) "I'll say this is your day for guessin' good. You sure can do your stuff. That's who it was all right. But, say, dearie, listen. Don't you tell no person, see? An' even if you should ever tell Jim or sumpin', you make him promise he won't never spill it, see? You tell him to forget it, because if Fr—I mean the other party—should ever get told 'bout me dreamin' like I done—good-night! He'd

think I was a nut maybe, or he'd get awful sore or sumpin', see?

" An' say, cutie, lookut, I gotta sign off now. But, say, lookut. If you should anyway—you know—spill it to Jim or anything, don't you forget to remember what he says and all—if he thinks I'm a nut or sumpin', see? An' you tell him he mustn't tell no person, see?

"An' say, dearie, listen. By-by. You give me a ring to-morrow. Don't you forget."

(*Takes out vanity case, gives finishing touches to hair and complexion and slowly opens her typewriter desk.*)

A HURRIED CALL

(*The speaker is* MRS. MCSWINNERY, *a slouchily-dressed, stringy-haired person, wearing a pair of misshapen house slippers. The thimble on her finger and the pincushion attached by a tape to her waist indicate her occupation, which is dressmaking. She holds a small white china bowl in one hand. Her voice is high, nasal, drawling.*)

" Well, seein' you're gettin' ready to go out to dinner, Mis' Brown, I guess I better be goin', an' anyway I'm just as busy's I can be myself.

(*Steps towards door, pauses and looks at clock.*)

" Wonder if your clock's right, Mis' Brown. 'Cording to it I been here about two hours and a half. Funny, ain't it, how long it takes a person to borry a coupla cups o' flour off anybody?

(*Turns back into room and stands with hand on hip.*)

" Now, this morning I just run down to Mis' Maloney's, that lives down-stairs of us, to get the paper—it don't seem like it's hardly worth while for us to take one, when she has one sent to the house and her husband always gets one besides—so I just go down and get hers when she's finished with it. And, honest, I guess I went down about ten after ten, and I had to wait till she finished with it, so I didn't start to go home till about ten-thirty, and it was twelve o'clock before I got home. I just don't know where the time goes to.

(*Turns heavily towards door again, pauses.*)

"And, my land, when I think about the work I got piled up on me in my own flat it makes me sick. It don't seem like I never get nothin' accomplished, what with gettin' three meals a day and all, and folks runnin' in all the time wantin' me to do this that and the other and then worryin' me all the time to get 'em done in a minute.

(*Comes into room and stands with hand on hip.*)

" Little bits o' jobs they are, too, lots of 'em, that you'd think a person oughta be

able to do themselves, and yet they keep a-'phonin' me to know how their things is gettin' along. I just about spend most o' my time runnin' to the 'phone. But I just do the work as I get 'round to it. I ain't a-goin' to kill myself fer nobody, what with all I got to do 'round the house and all. (*Starts towards door.*)

" Well, I gotta be hurryin' home. What time was it a while back?

(*Glances at clock, then comes back into room to regard it more closely.*)

" Well, wouldn' that jar you? Pretty near supper time, ain't it? My, I gotta get along and get Pa's supper.

(*Takes a few steps towards door, pauses.*)

" Sometimes I think it's kinda foolish fer a person situated like I am, with a husband and a coupla kids, to try to do outside sewin' too. Every once in a while I work when I'm just sick abed—and at that it ain't so much the work as what it is the nervous strain. Just's I get started real good on somethin', sure's you're alive somethin's bound to turn up and stop me. If it ain't one thing it's another, 'specially

when a person ain't got reel good health, like I ain't.

(*Moves towards a rocking chair and leans on back.*)

" Now, the other day I was workin' on Mis' Jellikins' dress that she wanted fer a dance or somethin'. I was gettin' along fine an' seemed like I was goin' to get it done right on time. An' then all of a sudden I was took with one o' my dizzy spells that comes on me sometimes and I had to quit right that minute and go lay down the rest o' the day till it come time to get supper.

(*Sits down in chair and puts dish on floor.*)

" Now I leave it to you if she had a right to be crabby with me about it. I certainly hadn't done nothin' to bring on the spell. I hadn't et a thing for a coupla days except boiled cabbage an' coffee, becuz the lady that lives up-stairs of my sister she told my sister that when a person felt like they was puttin' on too much flesh, she says a good doctor told her there wasn't nothin' like boiled cabbage and coffee for reducin'—so it couldn't 'a' been

anythin' I'd et. An' yet this Mis' Jellikins I was tellin' you about she acted reel kinda provoked over the 'phone. Said she'd been countin' on wearin' the dress that evenin' an' all. 'S if I could help that! (*Deeply injured tone. Folds hands in lap.*)

" Trouble was she 'phoned me kinda late in the aft'noon, and I says to her why didn't she 'phone me earlier and tell me she wanted it in a hurry. She says she already told me a coupla times and she didn't want to bother me and all, but if she'd 'a' known she could 'a' finished it herself. I says ' I'm reel sorry you didn't know,' I says. ' I think you'd oughta 'phoned me,' I says. ' I guess you know as well's anybody that I got a pile o' work on my hands, and nachully,' I says, ' them that hollers gets.' Even then she seemed kinda peeved, but land knows what she expected me to do about it.

(*Rocks slowly for a few minutes.*)

" Well, I guess I better get home and get supper started. (*Leans over and picks up dish from floor.*)

" I meant to get the potatoes kinda peeled before I come down here, but I

thought I better get the flour for my pie first. I like to have everythin' ready to work with before I start in. I'm reel kinda systematic about those kind o' things.

(*Gets up heavily.*)

" Well, I hope you have a good time at that dinner party, Mis' Brown. You ain't got much time to get dressed and get there, have ya? It's most a quarter to seven.

(*Moves slowly towards door and pauses there.*)

" 'T's a good thing I ain't like Mis' Maloney, fer instance. She'd say she was a-goin' and then she'd stand around talkin' so you never *would* get dressed. (*Lays hand on doorknob, then takes it off.*) When I say I'm a-goin'—— (*Listens at door.*) Land, there's Pa a-comin' home to his supper. Well, as I was sayin' —— (*Calls through door.*) Yes, Pa, I'm a-comin'. I just run up to get some flour to make a pie fer supper. (*Opening door slowly.*)

" Now, ain't that alwuz the way? Here I am slavin' day in and day out and never givin' myself a minute's rest, and here

comes Pa home and becuz he's gotta wait half a second fer his supper he bawls me out. I might's well be one o' these women that spends half their time gassin' with the neighbors.

(*Goes out slowly, still talking, voice growing fainter as she descends stairs.*)

" Well, good-night, Mis' Brown. Thank ya fer the flour. Hope you have a good time at the party —— Yes, Pa, I'm a-comin'."

GRANDMA'S FOILED AGAIN

(*The speaker is* MISS MCCOURTNEY, *a fat, jolly damsel who is "in the handkerchiefs" at Champ and Company's department store. She is giving her chum an account of the latest unsuccessful attempt at match-making on the part of her grandmother, who believes that every woman should have a home of her own—with some kind of a husband in it.*)

"Say, kid, whadda ya think? My Gran's bust out again. You remember me tellin' you how she's bound I should get married and settle down, and how she's always tryin' to get me tied up with some kind of a meal-ticket. I guess I told you about her tryin' to grab off that crab from down state that his digestion was on the bum, and how I forgot to boil the water when I made the tea, and how I went and put pancake batter on the salad instead of salad dressin' and pulled off a few more stunts like that so's he went back home and married a widow that knows how to make bran bread and cambric tea.

" Well, after that she kinda lay low for a while and I begun to think she was gettin' back to normalcy, like they say, and then, believe me, she bust out in a new place.

" Say, kid, lookit! She sure worked overtime tryin' to crank this one up and get him goin' good for her swell granddaughter, and of course it was me that made him turn turtle.

" Say, kid, listen. I was right next to Gran the very first night she come honkin' up to our place and started to tellin' how she was down to my Uncle Tom's awfuss, and how my Uncle Tom interdooced her to such a swell—you know—widow man, and everything and how he wasn't so awful young, and yet he wasn't so terrible old neither, and seems like he made an awful hit with Gran, sayin' how he was so lonesome when his first wife died on him and everything. So, of course, right off, Gran asked him for supper.

" And say, kid, lookit. Gran's cute. I'll say she is. She kinda—you know—didn't say nothin' about me comin' the first time this—you know—widow man come. She only kept ravin' on how swell he was and everything.

" But say, girlie, lookit. After he was to her place a coupla times she give me a ring and says how this guy was comin' up the next night, and how about me comin' too. I says, sure, I was all for gettin' a swell meal, and you don't take no chances on Gran's.

" Well, say, sweetie, lookit. I kinda fell for this guy myself, he was so swell lookin' and refined and everything. And, say, kid, I didn't start in right away treatin' him rough like I generally always do. I was reel kinda refined actin' myself.

" And say, kiddo, listen. Me and him got along swell for quite a while. I guess I was kinda different to anything he'd ever saw not in a cage and seemed like he kinda liked to watch a wild woman work. He didn't seem like he even cared such a awful pile one night when Gran thought she'd be reel swell and have some kind of a first course out of grape fruit and I broadcasted mine all over his clothes.

" But, say, girlie, lookit. I don't know but what maybe I'd be goin' to be Mrs. Widow Man right now if I hadn't 'a' been such a swell daughter and everything and tryin' to do like my ma wanted me to. You see Ma seen a 'ad' in the paper

one night about a person could get canned goods awful cheap if they come over and got 'em and carried 'em home, and I says sure I'd go over and buy a wagon load.

"Say, kid, lookit. Just when I come out the door that swell bundle of canned goods busted open on me. And, say, kid, listen. Them canned goods started to roll down the sidewalk and I didn't have sense enough to leave the first ones roll and lassoo the ones that was left, so I started to run after 'em, and say, gee, kid, seemed like there wasn't nothin' 'tall all up and down State Street except canned goods joy-ridin'.

"Honest, kid, it was a scream. I pretty near laughed myself to death—seems like I just can't do nothin' reel dignified—and right in the middle of it one of them big cans cut loose and skidded kerplunk into some guy's legs. And, say, girlie, listen. He give a hop and I give a holler, and then I looked up at his face! Say, kid, lookit. It was Gran's widow man. I'll say it was. Can you beat it?

"And, say, girlie, listen. I wisht you could seen his face when he seen it was me. He give them crazy canned goods a look and he give me a look and then he beat it

and I ain't seen him or heard no news of him since. Neither did Gran.

"And, say, sweetie, listen. Gran was awful sore at him when I told her, him not speakin' to me or helpin' me or nothin', but I guess she was kinda sore at me and ma too. (*With a jolly chuckle.*) She's made quite a few remarks lately about how folks that's always buyin' cheap goods maybe they lose more'n what they save."

CHRISTMAS ON THE WAY

(*The speaker is* KITTY MCCORMICK, *of the neckwear department of Champ and Company's department store. The time is two days before Christmas.*)

"Merry Christmas, is it? Say, if I thought Christmas'd ever get the habit of comin' more'n once a year, I'd —— Now, where do you s'pose my book is? I never seen such a place. Can't lay a thing down for a minute without somebody comin' along and pickin' it up right under your nose!

(*Searches frantically for missing book.*)

"No, I never said you took it, Mabel Mahoney. I never seen such folks for thinkin' a person means them when you say the most innocent thing. Why, Sade Peterson, what you doin' with my book? I'd like to know how a person's goin' to keep track of her sales when every time you lay your book down somebody comes along and picks it up and ——

"Well, I never said you didn't just pick it up to hand it to me. Of course I was goin' to thank ——

(*To a customer, pointing vaguely in no particular direction.*)

"Yes'm, the holly boxes is right over there. Aisle 6. Yes'm, right behind them books.

(*Turning back to fellow clerk.*)

"Well, for the land's sake, quit your jawin' anyway. I'm sure you're welcome to all the books in the place if you'll just shut up for a minute or two.

(*Between a sigh and a groan.*) "My land, I feel like my toes was all wrong side up, I'm that tired.

(*To another customer, with a vague gesture.*)

"Yes'm, the holly boxes is right over there. Aisle 6. Right behind them books.

(*Suddenly beginning another frantic search.*)

" Well, forevermore! What do you know about that?

(*Pawing about counter.*)

" Lost something. I just guess I have. My hand-bag's gone, sure's you're alive! Sure it is. I left it layin' right here not half an hour ago.

" Well, you know I ain't accusin' anybody. I ain't that kind. But all the same it looks mighty funny to me.

" I never said you was anywheres near it —— Well, for the land's sake, keep still for a minute and let me think. How many times do I have to tell you I know you wasn't anywheres near it?

(*Turns to another customer, with a comprehensive gesture embracing all directions.*)

" Yes'm, the holly boxes is right over there. Aisle 6, or maybe it's Aisle 4. Better ask the floorwalker.

" Honest, girls, I'm so crazy about that hand-bag I don't hardly know what I'm sayin'—— Well, I tell you this much, Sadie, what I think about a person I say to their face. If I thought you took it I'd say so quick.

"Well, no, there wasn't so much in it, not more'n about a quarter, I guess, but there was lots of samples of one thing and another and my Christmas list and a picture of Jim and ——

(*To another customer, with forced patience, feeling that the eye of the floor-walker may be upon her.*)

"Yes'm, the holly boxes is right over there, Aisle 7. Right behind the stationery. No'm, you can't get through this way. You'll have to go 'round. Yes'm, I'm sorry but the aisle's blocked.

(*To another customer.*)

"No'm, we ain't got nothin' cheaper than these. You'll have to go downstairs.

(*To fellow clerks.*)

"Look at the sales we're missin' because somebody don't know enough to keep the stock up.

(*Begins straightening boxes on shelf behind counter. Suddenly, in great excitement.*)

"Say, Sade, you know that apple I had

stuck in here between these boxes? Well, say, it's gone! Did you ever know anything to beat that?

"Well, don't you s'pose I know you never took it? You certainly do beat all for thinkin' a person means you every time.

(*Pushes boxes around, peering behind them.*)

"Honest, I'm gettin' gray-headed worryin' about that bag. I'd give a penny to know where it's at. And that apple disappearin' like it had legs and walked off by itself!

(*Props self exhaustedly against shelf.*)

"Honest, I ache clear to the bone. Seems like I'd die before this day's over.

(*To customer, without moving.*)

"Yes'm, the holly boxes is right over there behind the candy counter.

(*Returning to her search.*)

"And then there was that handkerchief my Sunday school teacher give me on my birthday. Recollect how I looked for it and couldn't find it anywheres?

" Well, yes, I found it after while, but it looked mighty funny to me that I should have to hunt and hunt and then find it right under my nose.

(*To a customer, limply.*)

" Yes'm, the holly boxes is right—where are they, anyway, Sade? You tell her.

(*With a tired laugh.*)

" Christmas is the glad old game, ain't it? I'd give anything to jump right over to the first of January and have it done with. Well, maybe I don't mean that. I'm just crazy about it when it comes, but, land, this here gettin' ready for it!

" It's a cinch if I don't find my hand-bag with my list in it there won't nobody get nothin' off of me.

(*To a customer, jumbling the words so that they are hardly intelligible.*)

" Yes'm, the holly boxes is right over there in back of them handkerchiefs.

(*Desperately.*) " Say, I wisht I never would hear the word ' holly boxes ' again as long's I live. I'm just gettin' to hate

the sound of 'em.—And I don't seem to be findin' my apple or my hand-bag, either.

(*Renews search for lost articles.*)

"Well, now, wouldn't that jar you? There they both are, right in back of this box! That looks mighty funny. I bet somebody put 'em there while I wasn't lookin'.

"You know just's well as I do that I wasn't accusin' nobody, but I do say it looks funny.—Oh, well, I don't care if you do get mad.

(*Suddenly, in great contrition, half-laughing, half-crying.*)

"Why, girlie, you ain't cryin', are you? Say, don't that serve me just right for gettin' so ugly? I bet I'm the orneriest ——

"Yes, I am too, but, girlie, if you knew how tired I am!

"Yes, of course you know. You're just as tired as I am. Say, let's go out and get a cup of good strong coffee and see if we can't forget it's Christmas. Here, gimme a wipe on your powder box, will you?"

HER ARISTOCRATIC FOOT

(MISS MALONEY *is what she herself would describe as a "nifty dresser." Special attention has evidently been given to the selection of her high-heeled shoes, which are the last word in footgear. She addresses her friend* MISS O'BRIEN, *who has accompanied her to the shoe shop.*)

"Say, Mame, he says Mr. Sweeney's gone out to lunch. Ain't it terrible? Now who do you s'pose I'm goin' to get to wait on me?

(*In a state of perturbation which she wishes to be sure is not lost on anyone within earshot.*)

"Yes, of course I know there's a plenty of other clerks, but there's so few folks can fit my foot.

(*Glances down with conscious pride at a foot in a very snugly fitting shoe.*) "You see, I got a reel kinda peculiar shaped foot. (*Hastily.*) That is, I don't mean it's reelly peculiar shaped. It's just kind of unusual, don't you know?

(*Lifts foot and turns it from side to side.*) Such an awful high arch. Ma says that's a sign we got some aristocratic ancestors. Some of 'em was kings and things like that in the old country. That's how I come to have such a high arch. Of course it makes a person's foot reel swell-lookin'. Everybody says what a swell-lookin' foot I got. But it's kinda hard to fit.

(*With a show of reluctance, turning to shoe clerk.*)

"Well, seein' he ain't here I s'pose I'll have to have some one else wait on me, but I don't know. Mr. Sweeney, he's used to my foot.

(*Sits down and holds out foot for shoe to be removed.*)

"My number's three and a half. (*Sharply.*) Well, I guess I got a right to know what number shoes I wear. I never wore fours, let alone four and a halfs, in my life. (*More sharply.*) I don't care what number they're marked. I always wear three and a halfs triple A.

(*To* Miss O'Brien, *glaring indignantly at retreating clerk's back.*)

"Say, Mame, j'ever see such nerve? Tellin' me I don't know what number shoes I wear. I guess I'd oughta know. Now if Mr. Sweeney was only here. He knows just fine how to fit me. And he's the cutest thing, Mame. He always says he never seen such a small foot and such a high arch on a person in his life.

(*Speaks again to shoe clerk with the air of one patiently explaining an important point to a person of hopelessly inferior intelligence.*)

"Oh, those ain't the ones I saw in the window! The ones I saw was reel kinda swell-lookin', awful high heels, don't you know, and tan tops. I'm awful sorry, but reelly I couldn't wear them styles at all. They wouldn't fit my foot no more than nothing. You see, I got such a kind of unusual shaped foot. Such a high arch. My ma says it's a sign of us having reel aristocratic ancestors in the old country. Ma says her ma had a foot kind of like mine, only not so narrow and high arched. Ma says I got the narrowest highest arched foot of anybody in the family.

(*Patronizingly.*) "Yes, if you would

get them other kind I'd be awful much obliged.

(*Examines shoes and looks at number.*) "Yes, that's the ones. But you've brought four and a halfs. Seems to me like it's a pity you couldn't remember I told you I never wore nothing bigger'n a three and a half in my life.

(*Very decidedly.*) "No, it ain't worth while for me to try it on. I've tried four and a halfs before and they're a mile too big. I just couldn't hardly keep 'em on my feet. No, you might just's well take 'em back. I never wore nothing biggern ——

(*Shrugs shoulders and speaks as one injured but firm in her position.*)

"Well, I'm sorry he had to get so crabby about it, but when a person has got such an unusual shaped foot they got to be particular about their shoes. You can see that for yourself, Mame, can't you?

(*To shoe clerk, forbearingly.*) "Yes, I guess those'll do. You can try 'em on. You're sure they're three and a halfs, are you? (*Wincing as shoe goes on.*) Well, I guess—those—are—about right.

(*With an approximately convincing imitation of a person who is not suffering from a tight shoe.*)

"There now, what did I tell you? They went on just as easy! (*A slight change of tone.*) Maybe they do seem kind of stiff, but then I don't think that shoe horn you're using is a reel good one. You see my foot's got such a high arch ——

(*Gets up and walks around painfully, then sits down. To shoe clerk, jeeringly.*)

"Too small! Say, you'll make me laugh in a minute. Why, my foot wabbles around in that shoe. I could get both o' my feet in it. It's just that it ain't quite the right shape makes it seem like maybe —— (*Draws foot out of shoe with considerable effort.*) S'pose you get me that other style—like those that other sales gentleman's trying on that lady over there, with reel kind of high heels and light gray tops. Be sure you bring me the right size. I can't wear nothing biggern ——

(*Holds up foot and regards it with high approval.*)

"Say, those are peachy-looking shoes. And they fit just fine. They're three and a halfs all right, ain't they?

(*Half shrieks.*) "Fives! Well, for the land's sake! Ain't they funny, Mame? Look how my foot just rattles round in 'em!

(*Laughs consumedly.*) "Say, it's a joke, Mame, ain't it? (*Trying to get her mind on serious business again.*) But I like the style of 'em fine. If it wasn't for their being such a pile too big I'd have a good mind to take 'em. They got fine lines to 'em. Have you got those in a smaller size? Fours? Well, I might try 'em on, but I don't s'pose I can keep 'em on my feet.

(*Winces and frowns as shoe is forced on.*)

"Well, I should certainly think they'd give you clerks some good shoe horns. How can you expect to get shoes on comfortable when you use a shoe horn like that?

(*Regards shoe disapprovingly.*)

"What do you think of 'em, Mame? Seems to me they don't look like them others. Not half as swell. What do you

think? Sure, they're comfortable, but I guess I don't like 'em so awful well—they don't look like that other pair. I guess I'll wait till Mr. Sweeney's in some time. He knows just fine how to fit my foot, and anyhow he's just as cute's he can be, Mame.

(*To shoe clerk, with a manner which she fondly believes to be a faithful reproduction of that of* Mrs. Van Gotham *addressing her bootmaker.*)

" No, I've decided to not get any shoes to-day. Seems like you don't understand how to fit my foot good. When a person's got such an unusual shaped foot they got to have just the right kind ——

(*To* Miss O'Brien *as they turn to leave the shop.*)

" Say, did ya ever see such a crab? Maybe if he'd 'a' acted kinda different I'd 'a' bought a pair off him."

(MRS. DRIVER *is almost in the front rank of the smart set of Snippersville. She is ringing up her friend,* MRS. WORTHINGTON, *who is so good, my dear, but she doesn't seem to care a bit how she looks, don't you know.*)

(*Effusively, but with considerable condescension.*) "Is this Main three-four-nine-two—oh, it's you, my dear. I suppose you are just as busy as you can be, as usual—always doing something for somebody else—but I just had to call you up this morning to have a chat. I expect to be so busy next week.

"Next week? Oh, yes, I haven't told you, have I? Well, you know Mrs. Crittenden, the woman I met last summer at Aunt Sarah's? One of those women, don't you know, that seem to take everybody by storm. And she has simply loads of money. But then she's one of those people that seem to take it so naturally, don't you know? Just like a queen in disguise, or something. And clothes! My

dear, she has the most wonderful clothes you ever saw. Well, she's coming to visit Mrs. Catlin. You know Mrs. Catlin, of course. Oh, you don't? Well, isn't that funny? She's really quite a person. I thought of course you knew her.

"Well, to go back to Mrs. Crittenden. I simply must entertain her while she is here. Aunt Sarah would think I ought to. I met her so many times when I was there last summer.

"What? No, she didn't really give anything especially for me, but she gave a tea while I was there and Aunt Sarah and I were invited.

"I thought I'd give a luncheon. A luncheon can be made so much more distinguished than an afternoon affair, don't you think so? Of course I might give a dinner. But then it's such an awful proposition about men for a dinner. I know my husband has to be simply badgered into his evening clothes, and I wouldn't undertake to find even half a dozen presentable men for a real dinner party. Women are so much more presentable, don't you think? And then I can entertain practically twice as many by having a luncheon. I can get eight women who

make a really good appearance—but some of their husbands! Well, my dear, you know how men are.

(*Adopts an elaborately casual tone as she approaches the real object of her call.*) "Oh, by the way, I wanted to know if you'd lend me your salad plates. Those little beauties that your Cousin Harriet brought you from New York. I thought they would add such an air to the table. If you could just have seen the wonderful things Mrs. Crittenden had on the table at her tea! My dear, it was like an exhibition of beautiful china and silver. Oh, and that reminds me. Could you loan me your best knives and forks? I have plenty of knives and forks, of course, but I want things to look distinguished, you know. Oh, will you loan me the spoons, too? You're a darling.

(*Slightly confused.*) "Oh, the guests? Well, I thought I'd have Mrs. Wrollman. I've always wanted to have her here, but somehow I never had anything that I felt was quite up to her, don't you know? She's so stunning. Then I'm going to ask Mrs. Trenton. You know her, don't you? Oh, you don't? I thought of course you did. She's one of the most distinguished

people I know! That makes five, doesn't it, counting Mrs. Crittenden and Mrs. Catlin and me? Well, then I must ask Mrs. Prentiss and her daughter. They'll be sure to have on those new dresses they got when they were in New York last month, and they don't talk enough before strangers to show how ignorant they are.

"Oh, and before I forget it, I want to ask you if you could possibly let me have your little maid for the day. You know I want to have some one in the dressing room. If you could have seen the servants Mrs. Crittenden had at her tea! The place was simply swarming with them. If you could let Mary come over for the day it would be such an accommodation.

"Oh, thank you, ever and ever so much. Well, my dear, I know you're terribly busy, and ——

"What? Oh, the eighth guest? Well I haven't quite made up my mind about that. I thought maybe I'd ask Mrs. Porter, because she'd come in her new car, and it's such a beauty, but she's rather socialistic in her tendencies and goes almost everywhere. You know I want this to be a really exclusive affair.

(MRS. DRIVER *has been experiencing all the sensations of* MRS. VAN BILTGOULD *arranging a dinner-dance in honor of the Prince of Wales. Her exaltation subsides rather suddenly as she listens to her friend's reply.*)

" What was that you said about Mary? You don't think you could let her come? Oh, that quite upsets my plans. I'm so disappointed. (*Drums impatiently on table with finger-tips.*) Well, I'll have to manage somehow.

" What? Oh, yes, about the other place. How do you think Miss Purcell would do for the eighth? She's such an interesting talker, and I must confess that Mrs. Crittenden isn't very entertaining. She's rather apt to just sit and take people in.

(*Her face becomes ludicrously blank. Her voice sharpens.*) " What? Did you say your knives and forks were in the vault? Couldn't you get them out? I don't know what I'll do if I can't have them.

(*She is almost in tears with vexation. Then a light dawns on her. She speaks*

into the telephone again in a cooing, not to say beseeching, voice.)

"Do you know, my dear, I've been wondering if I might venture to ask you to come. I just couldn't make up my mind to do it because I know how much more interested you are in your philanthropic work than you are in social affairs. I felt as if it would be such an imposition to ask you. I was so afraid you'd think you had to come, don't you know, and that you'd be bored to death by such a purely frivolous occasion. But if you would come! My dear, you've no idea how much it would gratify me.

(*Hastily — protesting.*) "You don't think you're 'swell' enough? My dear, now you're sarcastic. You know I'd rather have you than all those other people, but I really thought you wouldn't care about coming, that you'd hate to come, don't you know, and yet you'd think you had to ——

"You think you'd be more aristocratically represented by your spoons? Oh, my dear, you know I'd rather have you ——

"Hello! Hello! Hello! Oh, dear, she's rung off. I suppose she's angry and

I won't get any of her things. How stupid of me! Why didn't I ask her in the first place? She probably wouldn't have come anyway.

(*With a shrug of impatience.*) "Well, I'll have to try somebody else for the silver. I'll call up Mrs. Gaddes. I know she won't be here next week, so I am safe in inviting her before I ask for the things."

(*Takes up telephone again.*)

FIXING THE DETAILS

(*The young lady in the telephone booth is a pleasing blonde person, whose general air indicates that she is a faithful, not to say meticulous, follower of the prevailing mode. As will appear from her conversation, she is equally conscientious in keeping her vocabulary strictly up to the minute.*)

"Zis Central nine-double-o-two? Mr. Nelson there?

"Oh, sure.

"No, he ain't answered yet.

"Thanks, girlie.

"Not yet, dearie. Punch 'em in the year, will ya?

"Thanks, old dear.

(*She stands holding the receiver with one hand while she mechanically executes with the pencil she holds in the other the sort of cabalistic symbols that usually occupy the time of a person waiting for a telephone connection. Presently she drops her pencil and a coquettish smile breaks over her face as she raises it toward the transmitter.*)

" Hello, Mr. Nelson. That you, Walt?

" Well, I'll say it's a pity you wouldn't keep a person hangin' on the 'phone for a coupla hours while you doll up to come talk to 'em.

" You was? Who was you in conference with? The office boy, huh?

" Gee, I'll say it's some swell job you got. Say, kid, listen. I got sumpin' to tell you. Where was you last night when I 'phoned you?

" Oh, maybe eight-thirty or nine or sumpin' like that.

" Like fun you was! Why, I fed three nickels into the 'phone tryin' to get you and every time your ma says you was out, but they was thinkin' you'd be in most any minute.

" Like fun you was! I'll say it was funny if you come at five after nine when I just quit callin' you at nine. But, say, Walt, honest, where was you last night?

" Like fun you was! You can't put nothin' like that over. I'm onto you. Absoolootly. But, anyway, you don't need to tell me anything. I ain't your mother or your sweetie or not even any relation at all, see? But, say, dearie, listen ——

(*She laughs self-consciously.*)

" Oh, I bet I never. You got a tin ear. I guess I got a right to know what I say over the 'phone or anywheres else, only when a person don't hardly ever 'phone to no person but her girl friend, it wouldn't be so awful funny if I did kinda of—you know—forget who I was talkin' to sometimes, see?

(*She listens silently for a moment, then nods several times, giggling softly.*)

" Sure. That's all right. But, say, Walt, listen at what I 'phoned you about. Say, us girls is—now—thinkin' of pullin' off a party pretty soon and we was kinda thinkin' who we'd ask and everything and some of the girls says maybe you'd like to come and so I says I'd 'phone you and ask you. It don't make no difference to me who I 'phone to or anything. Absolootly. So I just said I'd do it, just like that, see?

" Oh, quite a bunch, but not such an awful big bunch. Just Hazel and Dawr'thy and their sweeties and some other dumb-bells.

" Over to our place. We're goin' to have some swell eats and ma'll play the

phonograph so's we can dance and everything.

"Absoolootly. Ma sure is the berries. Says she likes to have a bunch of Indians around—rather have 'em than not, see?

"I'll say she is. Absoolootly. And she bakes a mean chawclut cake, I'll tell the world. And she's goin' to cook us coffee, too. Some baby, what? The girls is goin' to bring the sandwiches and the fellas is goin' to bring the ice-cream and like that. And say, Walt, listen. Every fella can have a girl along if he wants to and if you wanta bring that vamp you was out with last night it's all right with me.

"Say, Walt, listen. You got a good line of talk all right, but when a fella goes out and tells his ma not to tell any person that rings up where he's at and everything, I guess I know. Absoolootly. But, say, Walt, look ut here. What if you was out with your sweetie? You don't have to tell me or anything. Only it seems kind of—you know—funny, you and me bein' acquainted with each other so long and everything I should think you'd just as lieve tell me about her, what?

"Oh, say, be honest, kid. You sure

have got a wonderful line. But, say, sweetie, lookut here ——

" Oh, I bet I never. You're just terrible to-day—all the time sayin' I say things I never had no more intentions of sayin' them than anything in the world. But, say, Walt, listen. If you think your sweetie would feel kind of funny kissin' herself in where she ain't acquainted or anything, I don't mind 'phonin' her and tellin' her to come. I don't care who I 'phone to. It's all right with me.

" Sure, I'll listen. I didn't know you was tryin' to talk.

" Honest, Walt, I bet you wasn't. I bet you was out with some Jane. Absolootly. If you honest wasn't out with your sweetie or anything ——

" Honest, was you, kid? I bet you think I'm awful, kiddin' you along like that when you was all the time over to see your sick auntie. Honest, I never meant a thing. You ain't sore at me, are you? And say, dar—I mean Walt—how about Wednesday evening for the party? Only if you've got a date or anything we can just as well have it some other time ——

" Say, ain't that grand? I'm just tickled pink. I was awful kind of—you know—

scared you'd have a date or something. And, say, dearie—I mean Walt—ain't it awful how I keep thinkin' you're my girl friend and sayin' things I didn't have no more intentions of sayin'—but say—Walt, listen. I'll 'phone the bunch to-morrow and tell 'em Wednesday's all right with you, what?

" I was awful kind of scared you'd have a date—or I mean some of the other folks would ——

"And, say, Walt, listen. If you get away from work reel kind of on time you come right on over to our place and have supper with us and help us get ready for the party and everything, see? You know ma. She'll get us a grand supper.

" Sure. And, say, kid, listen. You be sure and come, see? I bet we have a swell time, don't you?

" Sure, and say, lookut. You 'phone ma from the office just before you beat it so she can have supper on the table when we get there, see?

" Sure. Well, so long, kid. I gotta tune out now. You be good."

(*Humming a gay tune, she hangs up the receiver and leaves the booth.*)

CHOOSING PRESENTS

(*An attractive looking young matron enters the suburban train and walks down the aisle after her little daughter, who flits along ahead of her. The mother reverses the back of one of the seats and the small daughter clambers up while her mother seats herself opposite. The mother speaks.*)

"Don't put your muddy feet on mother's dress, Louise, dear. There, that's the way to sit! Now, look out and see if you see daddy coming. Not that way, sweetheart. The other way.

(*As a pleasant, appropriate looking husband and father appears at the end of the car.*) "Oh, there he is! Why, yes, dear, I said we'd be in the third car from the front. Did I say from the back? Really, I was sure I said from the front—or was it from the back? It seems as though I were likely to say anything, I'm so upset!

"A perfectly awful time, dear. I have shopped this livelong day and haven't

bought a thing—not a living, breathing thing! Your socks? Why, yes, of course, but that didn't help any, because there was only one thing to get and I just got it and didn't have to decide anything. It's the process of deciding that wears one out, you know.

(*Leans forward and gently pushes aside* LOUISE'S *small, sturdy legs.*) "Louise, dear, don't put your muddy shoes on father's trousers.

"Yes, I know he doesn't care, but I care, and you don't want to get his nice clothes all dirty. Poor daddy!

(*Speaking to her husband again.*) "It's the presents, dear. I'm simply insane trying to make up my mind what to get. It's almost as bad as Christmas. Wedding presents, and baby presents and birthday presents ——

"Yes, indeed! For instance, I can't seem to make up my mind what to give your sister Belle for a birthday present.

"Of course I have to get her something.

"Not care? Indeed she would care, and so would your mother and the girls. My dear, I have a younger sister myself. I know how people-in-law talk.

(*Reflectively.*) "Yes, of course. I

might give her handkerchiefs—but then handkerchiefs are so—so—commonplace, don't you know? I consider them the last resort of the unresourceful. I might get her a very nice one—but no, I can't. That's decided. I simply can't. No use talking about it any more. I must get her something with more—character.

" Then there's Marie, my cousin, who's going to be married next month. I thought of getting her a percolator and then I remembered hearing her talk about them the other day and I can't for the life of me remember whether she said she liked them or whether she said she wouldn't use one if she had a dozen. I have a feeling she said she hated them, but I wish I'd got one for her just the same, so as to get her off my mind. What difference does it make whether she wants one or utterly scorns them?

(*Pushing* LOUISE's *feet away again.*) " Louise, dear, I told you not to put your feet on my dress. Your little shoes are so muddy!

" Then there's a wedding present for Frank Painter ——

" Yes, you did know it. I told you ages ago.

"Mary Collier.

"The 25th.

"Absolutely, I did tell you! You've forgotten. I despise Mary Collier and I wouldn't think of giving her anything if it weren't for Frank's sake. I'm devoted to Frank. He's a perfect dear. Yet there is the puzzle. I've got to get something she'd like and leave him out of the question altogether. Such a foolish custom! Acting as though the man didn't count for anything. I'd perfectly love to give Frank something, but I shall grudge every cent I spend on her.

"I called up her sister this morning, thinking maybe I could get an idea of what they wanted or something, and do you know, that woman started right in to tell me all the things they had already and she made fun of them and talked in the most scandalous way about them. I had thought of getting a bonbon spoon or a pickle fork and you'd have thought she actually knew what I was thinking about, for almost the first thing she said was that they had dozens of bonbon spoons and that the general public must think they were going to subsist entirely on pickles from the number of pickle forks they had.

"I might give her something in cut glass—she's crazy about it—but then there's Mary Perkins. I couldn't give one something that cost a lot more than the thing I give the other. It seems like such a farce, for I'd really like to give Mary Perkins something nice. So annoying!

"Why, my dear, of course they'll know what things cost. Everybody knows. Of course it isn't the value of the gift, but just the sentiment and all that, but everybody knows the price.

"Well, I'm sure I can't help it. It's just the way things are. I'm not responsible for the way the world's run. Things would be quite different if I were, I can assure you.

(*Again addressing* LOUISE.) "Louise, you simply must not put your feet on daddy's trousers. I'll be ashamed to walk home with him!

"Do you think that's a nice way to answer your mother when she's been shopping all day and is so tired she doesn't know what to do?

(*Turns again to husband with a worried frown on her face.*) "If only I could remember who sent me that nightmare of a vase last Christmas! If I could, I might

use it for somebody—there are such oceans of people we have to remember in different ways ——

" Why, of course, you remember it! It is the most atrocious object I ever saw. Nobody could forget such a hideous thing. I gave one scream of horror when I opened the box and then the card got lost and I never could remember who sent it. You must remember it.

" Well, it really doesn't make any difference, anyway. The point is that if I were sure it came from somebody who wouldn't ever find out I'd give it to Stella Payne. She has to add to the confusion by marrying next week. She loves to clutter up the house with useless horrors and she's so sweet-natured that she'd think anything you gave her was lovely. But not knowing, I'd be afraid ——

"And then there are Jane's twins. I must say, even if she is your sister, it seems rather inconsiderate of people to have twins. Of course there are millions of things to give babies—too many of them. My head began to feel like a perfect bean-pot. I couldn't decide on a thing.

" Oh, dear me, here we are at the station. And I thought you'd give me some ideas

about your own people, at least. I suppose I'll have to spend another day shopping.

"I suppose it would be better to take a cab to the house, but it seems foolish, because I'll be dead long before to-morrow's over and we ought not to spend any money on unnecessary things.

(*She pulls* LOUISE *away from the window.*) "Come on, dear. The train's stopping. Fred, dear—why, he's gone! And my packages! I can't find one of them. Louise, what did you do with mother's parcels? I had—I don't know how many I had —— Do you suppose your father —— Why, he did. There he is on the platform with every one of them, hailing a taxi. Just like a man. Why couldn't he have told me? And I'm so worn out thinking about presents, most of them for his own people, too. I should think he'd have had more consideration —— Louise, dear—hurry up. We'll never get off. (*Pushing* LOUISE *ahead of her.*) Hurry, dear, hurry." (*She manages to get off with her small daughter one second before the train starts.*)

JIM'S GRANNY

(ROSIE PIERSON *is a bright-eyed, round-cheeked little person, very pleasant to look at. She holds the telephone receiver in her right hand so that she may watch the sparkle of a perfectly new diamond ring on the third finger of her left hand. She speaks cheerily.*)

" Hello, Mabe. How are you?

" Sure it's me. Who else would it be? The President or the Prince of Wales, or someone, askin' you to go to dinner with 'em?

"Aw-w-w quit your kiddin'. I can't stay here all day joshin'. I want you to do sumpin' for me.

(*Laughs a little confusedly and hesitates.*) "All right, but I bet you'll think I'm a reg'lar cocoanut. Say, kiddo, we was over to Jim's gramma's last night.

" Well, I guess maybe I hadn't said much about her. You could get all I knew about her in a peanut and have plenty room left—till last night.

(*Laughs again nervously.*) " Well, wait a minute. I'm gettin' to it. Well, say—you know—since I been goin' with

Jim there hasn't been a week passed but what he'd take a night off to go sit with his gramma. It got me kinda sore lots o' times. That's why I wouldn't never ask about her very much.

" Honest, it seemed like Jim was always trackin' over to sit with his gramma when I wanted to go to a movie or sumpin', and I felt like he'd oughta come over to the house whenever he could, him workin' nights sometimes like he does and all, see?

" Sure, that's all right. I ain't kickin' now. But say, kid, lookut here. Do you remember that there grand pink negligee that you an' me was rubberin' at one noon an' I didn't kind of know whether I'd buy it or whether I wouldn't? Well, I hiked over and got it the next day.

" Sure, better'n what I did when we seen it first, and Jim he was all for it too, when I showed it to him. He said it made me look like a—you know—sweet pea. Wasn't that cute?

(*Puts third finger of left hand through its paces while she regards the sparkle of the ring affectionately.*)

" Oh, sure. I'm comin' to it. Well, after he'd passed a few remarks like he'd

have to step pretty high if he was goin' to keep pace with me and kiddin' along like that for a while, Jim says, kinda like he was thinkin' 'bout sumpin', he says, 'Gee,' he says, 'I wisht ——' an' then he kinda stopped and didn't say nothin' else. I waited for a coupla jiffs and then I says 'Gee what?' I says. 'Oh, nothin',' he says, 'I was just thinkin'.' 'Well,' I says, kinda crabby, 'I wisht you wouldn't start thinkin' out loud if you don't wanta go on and finish,' I says. 'I've always heard a person hadn't oughta start nothin' they can't finish,' I says.

"Jim he kinda laughed. 'I was only just thinkin' 'bout Granny,' he says, 'an' kinda wishin' I could buy her one o' those pink things. She's so kinda little and cute she'd look swell in it,' he says.

(*The hand wearing the ring lies still and* ROSIE *gazes into space as earnestly as though she were looking into the responsive eyes of the girl at the other end of the wire. Her voice is solemn.*) "Honest, Mabe, I bet if you went over this town with a vacuum cleaner you wouldn't pick up nobody with a meaner disposition than what I've got. What do you think I says? I says, 'Well,' I says, snappin' at him just

like that, ' it seems like you think a pile more of your granny, as you call her, than what you do of me,' I says.

(*Slight pause.*)

" Jim, he didn't say nothin' for a minute —just sat there kinda whistlin' reel low to himself, and then he says ' I wisht you'd go over to Granny's with me,' he says. ' She'd be awful glad to see you.'

(*The hand with the ring begins groping around on the table.*)

" Say, kid, wait a minute. I guess maybe I'm gettin' a kind of a cold and I can't find my handkerchief.

" Well we went, and say, kid, I wisht you could see her. Honest, I never seen any person—for the lova Pete, where'd I put that handkerchief? It seems like it's just tryin' to hide itself and I guess I'm takin' a fierce cold ——

(*Finds handkerchief and uses it energetically.*) " Well, I guess I am maybe, and I guess maybe you would too, if you'd saw her.

" Kid, do you know she ain't walked a step for ten years! What do you know about that? Just lays there as patient,

lookin' out the window an' waiting for Est'er—that's her daughter—to come home, an' thinkin' she's havin' the grandest kind of a time if some of the neighbors comes in and brings her a piece of cake or some ice-cream, or like that, or even just comes in and sits a minute—and say, kiddo, you remember that pink negligee we was talkin' 'bout? Well, say, dearie, Jim's gotta work to-night, but lookut here, don't you want to have supper down-town with me and then go over and take it to granny? I don't need it no more'n a rabbit, and talk about your sweet peas! If she won't look like one in it ——

(*Makes liberal use of handkerchief, applying it to eyes and nose.*) "Well, maybe I am, but I bet you'd cry, too, if you was to see her—and say, old thing, you get over here to the office about twenty after five, will you? Then we'll have plenty of time to sit a while. We'll have a swell time. Granny's grand company, even if she can't get around. Well, so long. Mind you hustle over here just the minute you quit work."

(*Hangs up receiver, wipes eyes and nose, smiles happily at ring, and exits.*)

(*The youthful* ELMA, *who presides over the switchboard at* HARTMAN AND COMPANY'S *wholesale hardware store, improves the noon hour by ringing up her friend,* BERTHA, *who occupies a similar position in the insurance office of* HOMER BROS.)

" Hello, kid, how are ya?

" Same's yerself.

" Oh, nothin' particler. Just thought I'd call you up an' visit with you while I et my lunch.

(*Opens a lunch box which is ingeniously, though unconvincingly, disguised as a camera. Seriously.*)

" Say, girlie, lookut! 'D ja ever think I was—you know—reel kinda awful mean? I mean quite a lot meaner than other folks.

(*Takes out a pickle and bites into it hungrily.*)

" Oh, I don't know. Just how I feel about folks sometimes, I guess. Maybe

sometimes when they do like they oughta I want to bite their ear off 'em, and then when they—you know—turn 'round and act reel kinda hard-boiled, I get crazy about 'em, see? J'ever feel that way?

(*Starts in on a cheese sandwich.*)

" Say, do you get that way, too? Honest, kid? Gee, I'm glad I ain't the only one. But, say, sister, listen. You know I was tellin' you about this here Sade that works down to our place, that her and me went on our vacation together, see?

(*Cracks a hard-boiled egg on edge of switchboard.*)

" Well, when we started thinkin' we'd go to the summer resort together we begun plannin' what we'd wear an' where we'd go to an' everythin'. But, say, cutie, I'm here to tell you there was times when I pretty near went up in smoke. Here was me doin' all my washin' an' ironin' an' sewin' evenin's, and gettin' awful tired and peeveder and peeveder about everythin' all the time, an' here was this here—now—Sade, actin' like there wasn't nothin' that wasn't all to the good. Honest to Pete, girlie, there was times when I'd of give a

week's wages if she'd of registered one reel kick, see? Ornery? I'll say I was.

(*Dips egg into a paper of salt and takes a large mouthful.*)

"But say, sweetie, listen. She didn't put nothin' over on me. I never let on I wasn't just as glad about everything I wasn't no more glad about than nothin' as she was, see?

(*Takes another huge bite of pickle.*)

"An' say, cutie, lookut here. I got so's I just about—you know—hated that Sade. She got me so sore.

(*Finishes off remaining half of egg.*)

"Well, anyway, we fin'ly got started—took our grips down to the offus in the mornin' an' most broke our necks catchin' the boat at noon.

(*Stops to swallow a mouthful of sandwich, and speaks with much feeling.*)

"Honest, sweetie, it was the first time I was ever acrost the lake in a boat and you bet the next time I go any place that you got to go to it in a boat, I won't go there, see? I'll go some other place. But,

say, girlie, lookut, Sade she was all for it, seemed like, an' she kep' all the time steppin' 'round the old boat and sayin' how swell it was an' grand an' everythin', an' believe me, I kep' up the pace too.

(*Begins on a lettuce sandwich.*)

"An' say, kiddo, lookut. Pretty soon after we started the water begun to kinda —you know—climb up in kinda peaks like with white foam on top of 'em an' the boat she'd slide up one side of them green lookin' waves an' then down the other, an' I started to feel awful funny an' everything, an' Sade she started to look about's funny as I felt.

(*Finishes off lettuce sandwich and begins on another cheese sandwich.*)

" But did I let on? I did not. I kep' right on talkin' about this, that an' the other an' sayin' to Sade how there was some reel swell lookin' fellows the other side the boat and she'd oughta look at 'em an' everything, an wouldn't it be swell if we was to get acquainted with 'em an' all, and didn't she think they was swell lookin' an' everything, an' wasn't everything just grand an' all.

(*Swallows last of sandwich and begins on an apple.*)

"An' say, cutie, listen. First Sade she kinda says a coupla times sure, the fellows was swell, an' sure we'd—you know—try to sit at the table where they was goin' to sit an' everything, an' then pretty soon after a while I says somethin' else and Sade she didn't say nothin'.

(*Swallows huge bite of apple with a gulp.*)

"Then I says, 'Say, darling, listen,' I says, 'ain't we havin' a swell time an' all?' I says. 'Ain't you glad we come an' all?' I says.

(*Lowers voice confidentially.*) "Well, say, kid, lookut. Sade she give me one look an' then she sat down reel kinda—you know—sudden, an' she flapped her hand at me like she was awful sore at me an' she kinda—you know—hollered 'You big egg, you!' she says. 'You go and stay some place else,' she says, 'while you're feelin' good,' she says. 'This ain't no place for no person to be glad about nothin',' she says.

(*Hastily disposes of another bite of apple by a series of gulps. Impressively.*)

"Well, say, dearie, listen. We got along swell after that. I'll say we did! But I kinda—you know—keep tryin' to dope it out —— Say, cutie, lookut! Do you honest think it wasn't me just bein' mean, gettin' sore at Sade when she was—you know—actin' reel swell and kinda fallin' for her when she bawled me out good?

(*Produces a large slice of chocolate cake which she holds suspended before her lips as she awaits her friend's answer to this burning question.*)

"Don't ya, honest, kid? Ain't you grand? (*Bites into cake.*) Well, so long, cutie. Gimme a ring to-morrow, will ya?"

(*Applies herself blissfully and wholeheartedly to the consumption of the slice of chocolate cake.*)

GEORGE TURNED THE TABLES

(Miss Mamie Dinkelspiel *rings up her friend* Miss Rosie Reifsnider. Miss Dinkelspiel *is all a-quiver with the momentous news she has to impart.*)

" 'S this Central two double o two? Oh, hello, Rosie.

" Say, cutie, listen. Whadda ya know?

" Me? A whole bunch o' stuff. I'll say I do. Say, darling, lookut. I got sumpin' to tell ya.

(*Coyly, fingering the telephone cord.*) " Oh, just sumpin'. I wonder if you'd pass out if I was to tell you I was goin' to—you know—get married and everything.

(*Breaks into a nervous laugh.*) " Sure, that's the right dope. And, say, sweetie, listen. It's goin' to be reel kind of awful soon, too. You see my—you know—friend, he's crazy not to wait and all, see?

(*Astonished.*) " Who is it? Didn't I tell ya yet? Honest? Ain't I the nut? Well, say, sweetie, lookut. I guess you—

you know—kinda remember me speakin' about a guy that him and me's been acquainted with each other ever since we was to grammar school together, huh? Name George and everything?

"Well, it's him. I'll say it is! We didn't never—you know—go together or anything—anyway not what I'd call goin' together—just kinda takin' in a movie every coupla weeks or something or else he was over to our place evenings and all. But, say, dearie, listen. I never had no thoughts no more'n nothin', just like I said.

(*It becomes evident that* ROSIE, *at the other end of the line, is worked up into the proper state of excitement and volubility.*)

"Well, say, if you'll get off the gas a minute I'll tell you how it happened. You see this—now, George—I always was reel crazy about him and everything, but seemed like I was maybe—you know—so kinda used to him bein' 'round and everything and not thinkin' anything about him and all that, I guess I kinda—you know—didn't have no special thoughts ——

"Anyway, a coupla weeks back George he—you know—'phoned me would I go to

a movie with him the next evenin' and everything, and right after I says sure I would and everything, another guy that I know him reel well and all, he 'phones me, too, and asks me would I go to the Happy Harmony Club dance with him that same evenin' that me and George was goin' to the movies.

" I says sure I would, like a person does, and then I tells ma she was to 'phone him —that is, George—and tell him how I forgot I had this—you know—date with this other guy and so him and me'd go to the movies a coupla nights after the night we was goin', see?

" Well, say, dearie, lookut. When it was the coupla nights after the night we didn't go to the movies, here was me all dolled up and all, and did that George come jazzin' up like I told ma to tell him to? He did not.

(*Dramatic, but very brief pause.*)

"And, say, kiddo, listen. I waited till it was too late for the—you know—first show and then I 'phoned over to his place and, bless Pete, if his ma didn't have the nerve to tell me he'd went out a hour before. Absolootly!

(*Waits an instant to allow this startling assertion to take effect.*)

" Sure. Well, then I 'phones to my girl friend and her and me beats it over to the movie where me and George was goin', and who should we see sittin' there but George and another queen?

(*After another dramatic pause,* MAMIE *proceeds in a voice low and tense with meaning.*) "And say, dearie, listen. I never let on that night that I seen him or nothin', but was I goin' to let him get away with that rough stuff? Absolootly not!

" So I 'phones him the next noon, and I sure did bawl him out for fair. But, say, (*Impressively.*) the way he come back at me I pretty near faded out the pitcher. When I says he couldn't insult me, side-steppin' his date with me and then goin' joy-ridin' with another jane to the movies, he says where did I get that date stuff anyway, and he guessed he was through and all when a dame handed him a raspberry like I done, and he guessed even if he had kinda—you know—thought I was the only queen there was, when he come to give 'em the double O he found there was quite a few others.

(*Her expression indicates a prideful thrill at the recollection of* GEORGE'S *manly independence, with a pleasurable panic over what might have been the result of trifling with so masterful a personality.*)

"Well, say, cutie, listen. After he handed me a coupla hot ones like that, I begun to feel—you know—kinda awful funny—and then he started to hang up on me ——

(*Hesitates, then goes on with a half-ashamed giggle.*) "Well, say, cutie, lookit. When he started to hang up on me I—you know—commenced to cry right over the 'phone. Ain't I the nut? And George he heard me and everything—and, say, dearie, listen at here. He starts talkin' and he says he wasn't never goin' crazy over no other jane, but he wasn't goin' to let no skirt think she could kid him along like that and get away with it, and either we was goin' together or we wasn't, and everything. Honest, I never would 'a' thought George was such a—kinda—you know—caveman—like they say.

(*With a little happy, "All's well that ends well" laugh.*) "Well, anyhow, he

come over to our place that night and we fixed it all up.

"And say, darling, I bought me some swell longaree yesterday and an awful cute dress. You come on over to the house reel soon and give 'em the once over and everything, see?

"All right. So long, old dear."

(MR. EDWARD RYAN *takes down the telephone receiver. There is a pleased, almost fatuous, smile on his young face. The smile soon disappears, however.*)

"Hello, kid! That you?

(*In a troubled tone.*) "Why, kid, what's the matter of you? Sure, I won't if it makes you sore. But you're tryin' to kid me, ain't you, girlie? You know I didn't mean to act fresh no more than anything that ever ——

(*His voice grows more and more apologetic as he proceeds. The expression of his face becomes more and more pleading.*)

"But, girlie, lookit here. I never thought nothin' 'bout callin' you kid. I always done it, seems like. Why I ——

"Have a heart, kid—I mean Dawr'thy ——

"Well, honest to Pete, kid, I don't know what to call you. Anything you say goes with me, see? I only just ——

"Miss Ma—say, for the lova Mike! Say, kid, lookit here!

"Aw, gosh! You know I didn't mean nothin'—only just that I'm so used to—you know—callin' you that and everything.

"But, kid—I mean Dawr'thy—Miss Mahoney—I ain't done nothin' 'sfar's I know to make you sore at me. You'd oughta tell me. A guy's got a right to know. I'll say he has.

"But, say, girlie, lookit. You ain't goin' to give me the air like that without me knowin'——

"But, honest, kid, lookit. If I done sumpin' to make you sore ——

"Well, you sure sounded like you was. I'll say you did, and I ain't got nothin' else to go by. I'll say I ain't. But, say, kid, lookit ——

"Sure, it don't! I never said it did. But all the same it makes a pile of difference to me what you do, see? I'll say it does. And I ain't goin' to back down on that none. When a guy and a girl's went together as long ——

(*His tone changes slightly, also his manner, which gradually takes on a dignified reserve.*)

"Well, of course, if that's how you feel,

I guess I ain't got no come-back. Only I can't help wishin' you'd put me wise to what I done. It sure seems like a guy's got a right ——

" Sure, that's right. I ain't hollerin'! I know how to take my medicine. Maybe you got the right dope about us quittin' goin' together.

" Well, it was you said it first. I never had no thoughts ——

" Well, suppose you get off my neck and let me talk a minute. I don't know what I done and so it seemed like it was up to you to put me wise and you says no, nothin' doin' and everything and we better quit goin' together and so I says I guessed we better quit, too, and that's that!

(*Very stiffly.*) " Oh, that's all right. It ain't what I done, or what I ain't done. It's you pannin' me out and tellin' me I jumped the track without givin' me no chance, see?

" Sure, it's all right with me. That's what I keep tellin' you. I don't know's there's anything else to say. Maybe we better ring off now. We been holdin' the line an awful long time and seein' this's a four-party line ——

" Cert. I didn't know's you wanted to say nothin'. I thought we was through.

" Shoot! Ask me anythin'. I didn't have no intentions of buttin' in when you wasn't finished talkin'.

" Sure, I will. I was down to the folks down-stairs of us playin' Mah Jongg, like Ma told you when you 'phoned ——

" Yeh. Her that I told you was so swell-lookin' and such a cute kid. But I ain't seen her I don't know when, and last night she'd stepped out with her sweetie before I blew in to their place, see? I knew she wasn't goin' to be there before I beat it down.

(*Mischievously.*) " But I thought you wanted us to. You says we better quit and I sure thought you was givin' me the raspberry and I'm all for backin' off the map when a girl hands out a raw deal like that.

(*Eagerly.*) " But, say, girlie, lookit! Didn't you honest want us to—you know —quit?

" Honest, kid?

" Say, ain't that grand? And say, girlie, lookit. If you ain't got no date and wasn't goin' to wash your hair or any-

thing, how 'bout me—you know—droppin' over this evenin'?

"Oh, boy, will I? Say, kid, I'll be over to your place in a coupla jumps right after supper. I'll say I will. You just watch my smoke."

THE CASE OF THE BLONDE

(*The girl seated at the desk, holding the telephone receiver, is obviously of those who never allow business to interfere with pleasure. She has an air of intending to settle matters once and for all as she waits for her number.*)

"Hello! Is this Central two-double-one-two? Mr. Ryan there? (*Very coolly.*) Oh, 's that you?

"Sure, it's me all right. (*Her voice grows sharper as she proceeds.*) But you got your nerve with you, callin' me kid and everything, Mr. Ryan.

"Well, say, listen. I guess that's a kind of a good reason why it's a swell time for you to quit, see? Just because you was too fresh all the time ain't no reason why you don't have to quit now, see?

"Well, I guess you're wise to what to call me, all right. That's only for just my friends to call me by. Them folks that ain't nothin' but just merely acquaintances don't need to get so fresh to call me by my

front name, and kid, and everything. I'll say they don't.

" I'll say I ain't kiddin'. If you wanta know what my mere acquaintances that ain't too fresh calls me, it's Miss Mahoney, see?

" Sure it is. That's my name and I'll say it is.

"And I don't see 's there's no need of no explanations. I shouldn't think you'd need any person to tell you ——

(*Belligerently.*) " Well, say, what do ya mean, goin' together, huh? I don't know as you could say you and me was what you call goin' together; but even if we was, maybe it's time to quit, see?

" Well, I certainly wouldn't never have made mention of us quittin' if I hadn't of had a swell reason for knowin' you was all ready to ——

" Well, I guess I don't have to have no biff in the bean before I get wise to how a person feels. When a guy shows as plain as ——

" Say, listen. I guess you're wise all right or otherwise I'd be glad to tell you ——

"All I got to say, Mr. Ryan, is a girl's got a right to her self-respect and when a

fellow shows as plain as what some folks that I could mention done that he wants to quit goin' with a girl—if that's what you want to call it ——

(*Less angrily.*) "Well, who said I wanted to quit? I wouldn't never of thought a word about it if you hadn't of showed so plain ——

"Say, listen. I'd be tickled pink to only I guess you know all right ——

(*Almost pleadingly.*) "But, say, Ed, listen! I never said I wanted to quit goin' together. And I wouldn't never 'a' had such a thought in a thousand years, only when I 'phoned you last night and your ma says where you was and everything I couldn't help but think—you know—and everything.

"But, say, Ed, listen. How could I help but think when your ma says ——

"But say, lookit! I shouldn't think you'd want to ring off on me when I didn't finish tellin' you ——

"Well, I'm just tryin' to, only it seems like you was so—you know—crazy to ring off and everything.

"Well, honest, Ed, where was you last night when I called up?

"Huh, that nifty blonde? (*Her voice*

hardening again.) "Well, I guess this is where we might just's well bust the combination.

"Well, if you was down playin' Mah Jongg with that jane ——

"Wasn't home? You was playin' Mah Jongg with her folks? (*Not convinced, but anxious to become so.*) Is that straight? Honest, Ed?

(*She listens silently for a few moments, her expression gradually changing.*)

"Say, kid, I bet you think I'm a regular dumbbell.

"Well, that sure is grand of you, but don't it just show how a person had ought to—you know—kind of know what they're up against before they step on the gas and cut out the muffler, see? I'll say they'd ought.

"Sure, and, say, kid, lookit. I guess you thought it was awful funny me gettin' so kind of—you know—sore and everything when your ma says you was down to the—you know—blonde's, and not knowin' you went down to play Mah Jongg with her pa and you never even seen her, and everything.

"Well, say, Ed, listen. I didn't think

nothin' 'bout you thinkin' I—you know—reelly meant ——

" Well, say, Ed, lookit. I guess I just said what I said 'bout you callin' me Miss Mahoney and everything because I was kind of sore—I guess I didn't mean it no more'n a rabbit ——

" Say, ain't you grand?

" It's the dope all right. I should think you'd be so—you know—sore at me for bein' such an awful crab ——

" Well, anyway, I bet you won't ever want to come over to our place like you uster—anyway not until it's been an awful long time ——

" No, I ain't. What do you want to know for?

" Say, ain't you swell? I'd just love to have you come over. Honest, I would.

" Honest, I wasn't. I was just goin' to set around and read a book or maybe 'phone some the girls or something ——

" Say, kid, won't that be swell? (*Quite pleadingly.*) And, say, Ed, listen. You ain't sore or anything, are you, about me—you know—kind of thinkin', huh?

" Honest? (*In a tone of great relief.*) Well, you certainly are swell!

"And say, Ed, I know Ma'd just love

to have you come over to our place to supper to-night.

" Sure, you know I want you to ——

" Honest, that's the dope. I just can't hardly wait to see you.

"All right, you hustle over right after work. Well, by-by till this evenin'."

(*She hangs up the receiver with the air of having accomplished something well worth the effort.*)

THE SECRET

(*The filing clerk confides a secret to her most intimate girl friend. She is speaking over the telephone in a voice which might easily be heard at the other end of the long suite of offices.*)

(*Very breezily.*) "Hello, girlie, what do you know?

"Me! Not much of anything. Same as usual. Say, dearie, listen. What time d'ja get home last night?

"About half after twelve. After we got on the 'L' it didn't take us no time, hardly, see? Anyway it didn't seem like no time hardly.

"Sure. And, say, dearie, lookut. Didn't we have the swell time, what? I'll say we did.

(*She lowers her voice very, very slightly.*) "Say, dearie, listen. I got sumpin' to tell you.

"Sure. It's swell. I'll say it is.

"Sure. But I can't, you know, tell you over the 'phone, see?

"I gotta wait till I see you. You know

a person's gotta be so awful careful how they talk over the 'phone, see?

(*With an air of great mystery.*) "Oh, just sumpin' reel kind of awful interestin'.

(*She speaks as though an entirely new idea had suddenly entered her head.*) "Say, kid, listen. Did you ever notice last evening how kind of reel different Bert acted?

"Oh, I don't know. Mostly he kids along quite a bit, but last night he was so awful kind of serious and didn't say nothing much, see? So after we got on the 'L' I begun to—you know—kind of kid him along about it a little.

"Oh, just a few things here and there—like I guessed he was thinkin' about that blonde down to the awfus that's always tryin' to get him to come over to her place, or sumpin', see?

"He come right back at me. You can't put nothin' over on Bert. I'll tell the world. He says he guessed so far as he was concerned he wasn't goin' to let no blondes keep him awake nights or any other time. Wasn't that cute? Then after a while I says I guessed he wasn't goin' to let *no* girls keep him awake so's you could notice it—not—you know—havin' no spe-

cial thoughts or anything. Just kinda casual like, see?

" Well, then he says he guessed he hadn't let no girl do it yet, but he didn't know if he would or he wouldn't some time, see? Can you beat it? Say, I pretty near died. (*With a self-conscious giggle.*)

" Then I says to him he must be thinkin' of some special kind of—you know—girl that he'd maybe go crazy about. I wasn't thinkin' about a thing, but then he says he guessed maybe he was—you know—thinkin' about a special kinda girl, and then I says ——

(*Suddenly resuming her air of great mystery.*) " But, say, dearie, listen. You come over to our place to-night and I'll tell you.

" Sure. But then you know a person's gotta be so awful careful over the 'phone. You never can tell who's listenin' in, see? But anyway, Bert he says I was some little guesser, and like that, and then I says—you know—just kiddin'—I says who was the girl and everything.

(*Almost bursting with excitement.*) " Say, I wisht I could tell you over the 'phone, but you know how careful a per-

son's gotta be.—Well, anyway, Bert he says never mind who was the girl, and I says it sounded like he was thinkin' of gettin' married from the way he was talkin', and he says maybe he was thinkin' about it, but he guessed he wasn't the only one that was thinkin' about it, and I says what did he mean? And he says oh, never mind what he meant, but he guessed he had a couple of eyes and when he seen things he guessed he seen 'em, see? What do you know about that? (*She bursts into a loud, cheerful laugh.*)

"Well, say, cutie, listen. Bert kept right on actin' so funny, and after a while he says right out who was that fellow he seen me walkin' out with Sunday. What do you know about that?

"I pretty near passed out.—But after while I says to Bert, I says, who outside of him wanted to know, and he says he didn't know as anybody outside of him did, but *he* did, and if I didn't want to tell him he guessed I didn't need to, and like that. I kidded him along that way till he got reel kind of awful sore, and then I says to him it was—you know—my brother Mike I was out with. And he says—kinda funny, 'Well, what do you know about that?'

"And then he didn't say nothin' at all for quite a while, see?

(*Cautiously.*) "Sure, I will. I'm crazy to. Only you know how it is talkin' over the 'phone and all. You never know who's listenin' in—but anyway, then I says to him, well, I guessed it didn't make no great difference to him who I went walkin' with, and he says how did I get that way. And then I says up to the present time I didn't have no idea my actions made no difference to any person that I could see—and then he says ——

"But, say, dearie, listen. I'll 'phone you this evenin' and tell you,—only I guess I better wait till I see you and everything—but anyway, we talked back and forth like that for quite a while and then Bert he says if I didn't know who he was thinkin' about when he was thinkin' about gettin' married how did I get that way—but say, cutie, I can't say nothin' over the 'phone ——

(*Lowering her voice sepulchrally, but speaking with careful distinctness.*) "But say, kiddo, we're goin' to pick the—you know—ring to-morrow noon. Can you beat it?

"And, dearie, you come on over to our

place right after supper and I'll tell you all about it before Bert comes. I'm just so excited I can hardly talk, and, anyway, you know how it is talkin' over the 'phone —a person's afraid to say anything at all ——

"Well, by-by. Don't forget to hustle right over toot sweet after supper!"

(*Looking cautiously around, she restores the telephone receiver to its hook and returns to her work, smiling blissfully.*)

WEDDING BELLS

(Miss Stella Windmuller *addresses her friend* Miss Gertrude Petersen *via the telephone.*)

" Hello, that you, Gert?

" Fine, girlie. Say, some swell dance last night, what? D'ja have a good time?

" Me! I sure did. I guess if you could see me you'd say so, too. I look like I ain't slep' for a week. Say, Gert, listen, I want to ask you sumpin'.

(*Coyly, somewhat nervous as she approaches the main topic of her conversation.*) " Oh, 'bout me and somebody else. Say, kid, listen. Didn't—now—Jim look swell last night?

(*Hastily and cordially.*) " ' How 'bout Ed is right,' old dear. I'll tell the world Ed was the swellest ever outside of Jim. Of course I gotta say that on account of—well —— Say, Gert, listen. What time d'ja get home last night?

(*With slightly exaggerated astonishment.*) " Well, good-night! Me and Jim was home a good half hour sooner'n that. I guess maybe you didn't know Jim blew

himself to a taxi goin' home. (*Tries to make this impressive announcement in a matter-of-fact tone, but does not entirely carry it off.*)

"He sure did. We waited a while for a car and then Jim he takes me by the arm and he turns me 'round, and he says 'This ain't no good,' he says. 'Let's beat it for a taxi,' he says. What do you know about that? (*Her speech ends on a note of irrepressible elation.*)

(*Resumes in a more tense and confidential tone.*) "An' say, girlie, listen. On the way home we kinda talked along for a while 'bout this, that and the other, and after while sumpin' was said 'bout how swell you looked and all.

(*With friendly earnestness.*) "Sure! I ain't kiddin'.

(*Goes on, her voice full of suppressed excitement.*) "An' then I says just for fun, not thinkin' 'bout a thing, you know, ''J ever see a fellow quite as crazy 'bout a girl as what Ed is over Gert?' I says. 'Well,' Jim he says, 'well, I don't know,' he says, 'I guess maybe there's some other fellows thinks just as much o' their girls as what Ed does 'bout Gert,' he says, 'if it come to a showdown,' he says.

(*Her excitement breaks out in a nervous laugh.*) " Well, I didn't have no particler come-back to that, and anyway he looked so kinda funny when he said it, and all, so we talked back and forth 'bout one thing and another for quite a while, and then I says sumpin' 'bout you and Ed gettin' married and thinkin' 'bout gettin' an apartment and all, and right in the middle of me talkin' Jim he says ' That's all right,' he says, ' 'bout Gert and Ed,' he says, ' but how 'bout us? ' he says.

" ' How 'bout us, what? ' I says.

" ' Gettin' married,' he says.

(*As she re-lives this stupendous moment* STELLA'S *voice fails her for an instant—but only for an instant. She continues with some lack of coherency.*)

" Honest, kid, I pretty near fell off the Christmas tree. I just wisht you could 'a' been there, old dear. I bet you'd died. I didn't scarcely know which way to turn or anything, an' I didn't know what to say no more'n a rabbit, but ——

" Say, Gert, we're goin' this noon to pick out the ring. Can you beat it? Honest, I'm so nervous I can't hardly stand still in front of the 'phone. An' say,

listen. I guess I better ring off now. I'll call you up again. I hadn't oughta took the time to call you up now, I got such a lot o' work to do when I get back to the office, but I felt like I just had to call you up, because I knew you'd just die when you heard about it. An' say, kid. Listen. Don't you tell any person, will you? I want to surprise 'em, and maybe we won't get married for an awful long time and I don't want everybody—you know—talkin'.

"An' say, old dear, listen. You know how crazy I used to be to have a weddin' an' all when I got married? Well, I guess I won't after all, what with prices bein' so high and Jim kinda not wantin' to, anyway. You know how men are. I guess we'll just be married reel quiet and just have our own folks an' the regular bunch, you know, and Ed and you and like that, and I won't have anything but a wedding dress an' a cake and a few little things—not anybody to stand up with us or anything.

(*Mysteriously.*) "An' say, Gert, listen. Don't you tell a soul, will you, because maybe it'll be an awful long time before we get married, but then on the other hand

I shouldn't be a mite surprised but what it would be reel soon, because Jim's awful crazy not to wait very long.

(*With a note of friendly, but perhaps not altogether unmalicious triumph.*) "An' say, kid, listen. Wouldn't it be a scream if me and Jim was to—you know—beat you and Ed to it after you an' him goin' together such a pile longer? Say, wouldn't it? Honest, kiddo, if we did, I bet I'd just 'bout die laughin'."

BREAKING THE NEWS

(GERTRUDE CORCORAN, *a tastefully dressed young woman, with a fresh-colored sensible face and capable-looking hands, has a piece of news to impart over the telephone to her chum,* ELLEN QUINLAN.)

" Hello, kid. How's the old girl?

" Just the same's you. Swell. How's all the folks?

" That's the cat's whiskers. Say, dearie, listen. I got sumpin' to tell you. Where was you this noon when I 'phoned you?

" Oh, go on! I bet I tried to 'phone you a couple or three times and every time they says you was out and they didn't know when you'd be back or anything. Some swell job you got. I'll say so. But, say, dearie, listen. What do you think I 'phoned you up to tell you?

" Oh, sure, I'll say it's excitin'. Anyhow, I'll say some folks thinks it is. I'll say they do. Guess who you think was over to our place last night.

"Aw, no. You're 'way off. I ain't seen that Sweeney guy for a blue moon.

(*Very earnestly.*) "But, say, dearie, listen. If I was to—you know—tell you sumpin' will you promise, honest to Pete, you won't tell no person?

(*She runs her fingers around the base of the telephone receiver in a slightly embarrassed way.*)

"Well, anyway, when I says you mustn't tell no person I don't mean—(*Hesitating and speaking very slowly.*) you know—everybody. Anyways I don't mean you mustn't tell your own folks—your pa and your ma and your gramma and your aunties—only I don't know if maybe they ain't the very ones I don't want to know most about it, see? It makes me feel—you know—awful kinda funny to think about them knowin' and all.

"Sure, but, say, cutie, listen. You didn't guess yet who was to our place last evening. Go on. Give a coupla guesses.

"That dumbbell? Fade away, kid. He ain't been over since I don't know when—not scarcely since the time you and—you know—your brother (*She gives a little self-conscious giggle, which she repeats*

every time she mentions the brother.) and Art come over and we had that swell game of rummy, see?

"Didn't we have one swell time that night? I bet Bert—I mean—you know—your brother—I bet he's said about a million times what a swell time we had that night and how glad he was he come and everything, see?

"Sure. But, say, kid, listen. I don't know anyway as I want you to tell your folks what I 'phoned you up to tell you. I don't know. Maybe they'd think it was kinda—you know—funny or sumpin' in me tellin'—only maybe I don't care if you tell your ma and—you know—your gramma—and maybe your aunties—only I don't know as I even want you to tell your aunties.

"Oh, you know. Just everything—what I 'phoned to tell you and all, see? It makes me awful kinda nervous and everything thinkin' about them knowin' when even you can't give a coupla guesses about who was over to our place last evening——

"Say, kid, forevermore! You'll make me laugh in a minute not thinkin' of any person but all them dumbbells when I should think you'd think right away who

it was, you and him bein' so—you know—well acquainted and everything.

(*Her tone changes to one almost of distress.*)

"But, say, kid, listen, I should think you could kinda dope it out. Honest, kid, I should think you could. It makes me feel reel kinda—you know—awful funny you not havin' no notions nor anything.

"Well, I don't know as I can't help from tellin' you if you ain't got no idees—but it anyway seems awful funny—and anyway it bein' some person that you know him so awful well—but anyway, darling, lookut here—I guess maybe me and him's goin' to—you know—get married some day, maybe reel soon. I don't know—only he says he don't want to wait so awful long ——

"Who? Well, I should think you'd know without me havin' to come right out and say it and everything. I should think him and you bein' brother and sister you'd 'a' kinda suspicioned ——

(*She listens a moment, then gives a little rippling laugh of relief.*)

"You did? Ain't you terrible, kiddin'

me along like that when you knew who it was all the time! Honest you are—just terrible. (*Speaking very hesitatingly again.*) But, say, dearie, listen. I bet you and your ma and your pa and your gramma and your aunties'll be just awful sore at Bert pickin' me when he's so swell-lookin' and kind of—you know—educated and everything, and I bet your ma and your pa and everybody thinks I'm just nothin' but a—you know—dumbbell or something.

" But, honest, darling, I can do a whole lot o' things. I can cook reel good and sew, and my brother Bill he says some ways I got more sense than any jane he knows, and you know a person's brother ain't goin' to say those sort of things without they're true. I'll say he ain't. You tell your ma and your pa and everybody, won't you, about me knowin' how to cook and sew some. And say, dearie, listen ——

" Say, sweetie, ain't you grand? You and your ma and your pa and everybody! I bet I'm goin' to have the swellest folks-in-law ——

"And, say, darling, lookut here! I'll ring you up to-morrow and ask if you did

you tell 'em and everything. I got to get back to work now, but I'll 'phone you up to-morrow. And, say, darling, don't you forget to tell 'em I can cook and everything. And, say, sweetie, by-by. I'll give you a ring to-morrow."

(*Fairly beaming with delight she hangs up the receiver.*)

ON THE BOUNDING BILLOWS

(*The scene is the deck of an excursion steamer. The speaker is a buxom lady who is taking her three children for a day's outing. She is engaged on a piece of embroidery which apparently started life white as the driven snow, but which has assumed a discouraged-looking drab color.*)

"Well, if I ever undertake to take another boat trip with a pack of youngsters, I'll hire an assistant. I bet I'll be gray-headed before I get through with this. If the first one ain't doin' something they hadn't oughta, then it's the next one every minute of the time.

"Now look at that Harold right this minute climbing up on that rail! I bet he falls overboard before we get anywhere to speak of, and then his pa'll blame me. He's that kind of a man.

"I guess one of them old maids that's settin' there'll make him get down. Yes, I thought she would. They seem to kind of keep a watch out, her and her sister. I've been watching 'em quite a bit and I guess

it'll be a real blessin' to 'em to have something to do.

"Why, I declare, she's goin' to have Harold sit down by her and tell him a story. Ain't that nice? I believe I'll have Mabel go over and listen, too.

"Sure, that's one of my young ones pulling her gum in and out. I do wisht she'd learn to chew it more dignified.

"Mabel! Ma*bull!* Yes, I certainly did call you. Now, don't get sassy. You didn't have any call to answer me back. All you had to do was just to ——

"Now, you listen to me and quit pulling your gum back and forth like a little Hottentot. It ain't a bit nice to do that!

"Well, because it ain't and I tell you it ain't. That's all you got to know about it.

"Listen, don't you want to go over and get Johnny and go and set down by that lady that's tellin' Harold a story and listen to it?

"Here, Mabel! You, Ma*bull!* You go and get Johnny first. Wasn't that what I told you to do? Honest, I never see kids that didn't mind better'n than what you kids do. It's just wearin' me out, that's what it's doin'. And your pa just backin' you up half the time when he's

home. Now you hurry up and go and find Johnny and go over and listen to the story.

"Well, my land, don't go find him then. It seems like when I wanted you to go a few minutes ago you wasn't so anxious but what you wanted to stop and chew the rag about it.

"Well, go on, then. Nobody's a-hinderin' you.

"It seems to me it's something fierce the way the youngsters act these days. Seems like they don't think they got to mind anybody. That's what I says to their pa. I says to him, I says: 'You don't make 'em mind and their teacher don't make 'em mind, and I ain't got the time or the stren'th to wear myself out tryin' to make 'em mind, so what are you goin' to do about it?' It seems to me like the teachers is awful lax these days. They don't seem to take no real interest in the young ones.

"I wisht Mabel would quit climbin' up on that old maid's chair. I bet she falls down and tears her dress. There's Johnny. I'll tell him to go over and tell her to quit.

"Johnny! John*nee!* I want you to go

over and tell Mabel to quit climbin' on that lady's chair that's tellin' her and Harold a story, and while you're there you better stay and listen to it. It'll keep you out of mischief, maybe, for a little while.

" Well, you don't have to stay, then. You just go over and tell her to quit ——

" There, he ain't goin' at all! Ain't it the limit how the youngsters act these days. Now, what do you know about that? That old maid's takin' Harold's candy away from him. She'll have him yellin' himself sick in a minute. That's all those kind of women know about takin' care of children.

" Well, say, can you beat it? He's let her take it away and throw it overboard and he's settin' in her lap like a little lamb and Mabel's settin' in a chair and listenin' like a perfect little lady! Those children's got the grandest manners when they want to.

" They're havin' a real good time, ain't they? And I guess those old maids are real glad to have something to do for once, so I guess I'll just go down to the cabin and lie down for a while. Seems like I get so worn out takin' care of those young ones that I just got to get some extra rest

now and then or I'd never be able to keep on my feet."

(*Folds up embroidery, on which she has taken perhaps three stitches, and descends to give herself a well-earned rest.*)

RANK INJUSTICE

(MISS FITZGERALD, *the faultlessly attired young person behind the glove counter, interrupts her languid attentions to a customer to greet a friend. The expression of acute boredom on her face is displaced by a beaming smile.*)

"Well, kiddo, if I ain't tickled to see you! Where was you all this time?

"Oh, fine and dandy. How's yourself?

"That's good. Say, girlie, whadda ya know?

"Oh, same's you. Nothin'. How's the folks?

(*Turns to dispose of an intrusive customer.*) "Yes, madam, these gloves is on sale to-day at one thirty-five, was one-fifty.

"No, we ain't got no big sizes. I guess you're out of luck. You'll maybe find some of them big sizes down to the other end. We ain't got none down here.

(*Returning to the really important business in hand.*) "Well, kid, I certainly am awful glad to see ya. I was goin' to 'phone ya a coupla nights ago, but just's I

was goin' to get a nickel off of ma somebody come and I didn't get no chance to.

(*With a self-conscious smile.*) "Uh-uh—it was him all right. How d'ja guess it?

(*Bridling a little, somewhat piqued.*) "Well, I guess as far's that goes there's a plenty of other folks besides him comes. He ain't got no—you know—mortgage on our Morris chair so far's I ever heard about it.

(*Mollified.*) "Oh, sure, that's all right. I ain't one to take no offense where no offense is meant.

(*Another obnoxious client needs to be put in her proper place.*)

"No, ma'am. We ain't got no large sizes down to this end. All the large sizes ——

"Oh, is that so? Well, there was just them three pairs left then. It wasn't the intentions to leave no large sizes ——

(*To friend, resentfully.*) "Well, whadda ya know about that? After all my trouble, she's goin' down to get that little shrimp of a Smith to wait on her. Ain't that just like some folks? Now, you'd think she'd rather waited a minute and left me wait on her rather'n go to that little

know-nothin'. (*Contemptuously, with her eyes on the objectionable* MISS SMITH.) Say, she ain't got no more personality than a rabbit, Smith ain't. That's what I says to myself the first time I set eyes on her. An' I says to her right out, I says, 'Maybe if you'd get your hair marcelled and kinda cut off your skirts an' make 'em look a little more classy,' I says, 'maybe you'd look kinda different,' I says. An' I says, 'I'm tellin' you for your own good,' I says, 'because it don't make no difference to me,' I says. But do you think she did it? She did not. Just went on fixin' her hair like she always did and wearin' her dresses down to her shoe tops pretty near, just like I hadn't—you know—said a word.

"Honest, Gert, I'm gettin' sick of this job—havin' to be thrown with those kind of people and doin' so much head work all the time without bein' appreciated. I'd quit but only if it wasn't that Miss O'Brine, her that's head of the department, is goin' to get married and quit and of course I'll get her job.—Not that I'm sure I want it.

(*To another inconsiderate outsider who interrupts the conversation.*) "No,

madam, we ain't got no sixes down to this end. We did have some but they was all sold this morning ——

" Oh, is that so? Well, I'm sure I don't know how they happened to be there—I guess somebody must of brought 'em down by mistake. There wasn't any ——

(*Impatiently, to another unfortunate would-be purchaser.*) " Yes, madam, I'll wait on you in a minute. Just's soon's I get through with this customer ——

(*To friend.*) " There, wouldn't that frost you? Beatin' it like that when I was just startin' to get my cash book. An' she's went right down to that little Smith! Honest, when I get to be head of the department I've got a good mind to let that little It go.

(*Hastily, on the defensive, as the head of the department approaches.*) " Yes, Miss O'Brine, I was just goin' to wait on a customer. I didn't see there was no person waitin'. I'll just get my book—I can't help it if a person don't wait to get waited on and anyhow it don't seem like Miss Smith's done nothin' all day but take my customers away from me ——

(*Her apologetic manner is suddenly replaced by a " just as good as you are "*

air.) "Oh, you just came 'round to say good-bye? Yes, I heard you was goin' to get married. Well, I'm reel sorry to see you go, but when a person's goin' to get married I s'pose a person had oughta congratulate 'em instead of sayin' they're sorry, but, land, you can't never tell how it's goin' to turn out. I s'pose they've picked out who's goin' to get your job, though I don't guess there's reelly much chance to pick when there ain't but so few reel spiffy-lookin' girls ——

(*Dumfounded.*) "Miss Smith? For the lova Mike!

(*To friend, with bitter irony as* Miss O'Brien *departs.*) "Well, say, kiddo, wouldn't that jar you? It's a good thing she beat it right after she told me. In another minute I'd laughed right in her face. Honest to Pete, girlie, ain't it enough to make anybody sick of their job? Won't I look grand takin' orders off a person that don't even know enough to get their hair waved?"

HER BUSY DAY

(*The stenographer enters the room in a leisurely way, removes her hat and coat, sits down at her desk and opens the top drawer. She takes out a note-book and lets the leaves slip through her fingers.*)

" It makes me weary to look at this note-book of mine. Honest, I been so rushed with work the last couple of months I don't know which way to turn. I bet I got as many as two hundred pages of notes that I ain't had time to write up yet. I'm goin' to count 'em. (*Counts pages in note-book, turning pages with the aid of a moistened thumb.*) There now, there's seventy-five pages I've written. Goodness knows when I ever will get the rest finished.

(*Takes out her vanity case and begins to touch up her complexion carefully, then looks up at the place where the annunciator is supposed to be.*)

" Whose buzzer is that? Young Thompson's? Say, I'm crazy about that kid. Where's my pencils? I'm going to

answer his call. (*Starts to leave the room, but stops as though someone had spoken to her.*)

" Yes, Mr. Reynolds, I'm going to write that lease for you just the minute I get time to. I'd have done it yesterday only I was so busy—honest, I've been rushed to death the last couple of months. I don't hardly know which way to turn. (*Turns as though speaking to someone seated at a desk near hers.*)

" Did you say that wasn't Thompson's bell that rung? Well, I guess I got too much work to take it, anyway.

" It's that man Gray, is it? Well, he's got his nerve with him, ringing at this time in the morning. I told him last night I wouldn't have time to take any more dictation from him this morning, because I wouldn't finish what I got till noon and he'd have to wait till I got 'round to it. A firm like this oughta to keep enough stenographers to do the work and if it don't it's gotta take the consequences. Anybody that wants to can tell 'em so from me. (*Turns as though answering someone who has spoken to her.*)

" Yes, Miss Murphy, if it's any of your business, I'm fully aware that I was a half

hour late this morning, but at the best I don't know that it's any of your business, so you could notice it. (*Turns in another direction, as though trying elaborately to ignore the other speaker.*)

" Well, as I was saying, Miss Peterson, Mr. Henry rung his bell the very first thing this morning when I come in, never giving me time to even wash my hands or anything —— (*Looks up as though someone had come to speak to her at her desk.*)

" Yes, Mr. Horner, I'm aware that I have those circular letters of yours. I'm goin' to write them just as soon as I get time, but when a person's rushed to death from morning till night and folks piling on the work till you don't hardly know which way to turn ——

" If that man Gray don't quit ringing his bell I'm goin' to send for the police. I should think he'd get tired of me having to tell him that I simply cannot take any more work till I finish this.

(*Turns her head as though speaking to someone on the other side.*)

" No, Mr. Gray, I simply can't take any more dictation till I finish what I already

got on my book. I'm sure I can't help it if it's only two short letters. The men around here has got to realize that if they don't keep enough stenographers to do the work they've simply got to take the consequences, and you can tell 'em so from me.

(*Calls as though to someone across the room.*)

"Mr. Maynard, come over here a minute, will you? I got sumpin' to show you. No, honest, I ain't kiddin' you. Come on and take a chance. Sure, you'd like to see it. It's a dandy bunch o' snapshots. (*Pause.*) No, I ain't going to make any copy of anything for you. I got enough to do as it is. You come on and look at these pictures. (*Pulls forward waste-paper basket.*) Sit right down on the waste-basket. Sure, it'll hold you. I've sat on it billions of times. What if it does break? I should worry. The firm can make a noise like it was prosperous and buy another one. (*Whirls her chair half round and speaks to someone approaching her desk.*)

"Mr. Parker, you might just as well take that long copy away. I got enough work to do without havin' a thing like that

unloaded on me. Want to see some dandy snapshots? Sure, you do. Be a sport. Who cares about the old copy, anyway? Maybe we'll all get struck by lightning or the building'll burn down, or something nice like that and then it won't ever have to be made.

"Sure, there's plenty of room. You can sit on the radiator and Mr. Maynard can pass the shots along to you and you can pass 'em back to me. Ain't that the nifty little arrangement? (*Whirls around and glances at the annunciator board.*)

"Say, if that man Gray don't stop ringin' his bell —— Honest, he gets me so nervous —— (*Showing snapshots.*)

"Yes, that's me. Fright, what? You wouldn't never know me, hardly, would you?

"My friend? Well, I should say not. Look at the nose on him. (*Turns almost around, as though speaking to someone standing in the doorway.*)

"No, Mr. Gray, I can't take those letters till I finish the work I got on my book now. I've got all the work I can do and then some. Well, what if I ain't doin' it right now? I got to do it just the same, haven't I? (*Turns back to snapshots.*)

"That's a cute one of —— (*Without looking at annunciator board.*) There goes another bell! I wish to goodness they'd take that board out. It makes me so nervous.

(*Drops pictures and speaks excitedly over shoulder to someone on her other side.*)

"Who'd you say it was? Young Thompson? Say, get out of the way, folks. Here's where I get busy.

(*Snatches hand-mirror from drawer, holds it in left hand, reaching out with right.*)

"Hand me my powder puff, will you? It's in back of those papers. (*Powdering nose, etc., while looking at self in mirror.*) Say, shut up, will you? Well, what if my cheeks are pink? You know as well as I do that I don't never use anything like that. (*Gathers up pencils and note-book, kicks waste-paper basket aside.*) Young Thompson? Sure, I'm crazy about him. All the girls are. Look at Murphy now. She's gettin' ready to beat me to it. Watch me fool her.

(*As she passes through the doorway she speaks haughtily to the imaginary* MR. GRAY.)

"No, Mr. Gray, I can't do it till maybe some time later in the day. Just now I've got to take some very important work for Mr. Thompson."

TRAVEL TALK

(*Young* MRS. MOTHERWELL *enthusiastically greets her friend* MISS STANHOPE, *who has just returned from a journey.*)

"My dear, you don't know how glad I am to see you! I think it's simply too dear of you to come right over and tell me about your lovely trip. And how perfectly sweet of you to bring all your photographs and post-cards with you! I'm simply frantic about post-cards! I think they give the most wonderful idea of things.

(*Drawing a chair forward.*) "Come right into the living-room and sit down while I run and get the baby. I want you to see him just a minute before you begin to tell me about your trip. (*Portentously but joyously.*) We have the most wonderful news.

"No, I won't tell you now. I want to surprise you.

"No, I won't really. You'll have to wait until ——

(*Runs out, returns with baby.*) "There now, here he is! Now, Toodlycums must let Aunt Mollie kiss his little cheek. No,

no, he mustn't put his tongue on her like that. Just let her kiss his soft little cheekums.

(*In alarm.*) "Oh, my dear, don't let him get hold of those cards, please. I'm afraid he'll put them in his mouth—and the color—don't you know I'm always so afraid—and besides I couldn't bear to have your lovely cards spoiled.

(*Draws baby back into arms, regarding him in absorbed adoration for a moment, then suddenly remembers friend.*) "Now, dear, I want you to begin right at the beginning and tell me everything. You don't know how I've been looking forward —— No, no, baby darling! You mustn't pull Aunt Mollie's glasses off. That's naughty. (*Bursting with pride in her offspring's precocity.*) Of course it *is* naughty, but I really do think it's perfectly wonderful how he notices when people wear glasses. I saw the minute I brought him into the room that he was looking right at them.

(*Gives baby a violent, tender squeeze, then sits gazing at him. Suddenly comes back to realization of duties as hostess.*) "You went by boat, dear, didn't you, part of the way? I remember you explained

just how you were going, but I was so worried that day because the baby—and, oh, that reminds me! We haven't told Aunt Mollie about our wonderful secret yet, have we, mother's love? (*Gives baby another squeeze.*)

" But first Aunt Mollie must take off her glove, mustn't she, Toodlycums? Now, Mollie dear, I wonder—of course you'll understand, so I'm going to be perfectly frank with you—but would you mind just washing your hands? Just go into my room there.

(*Hastily and apologetically.*) " I didn't mean to intimate for a moment that your hands aren't perfectly clean. Of course I suppose—I hope—that is, of course I *know* they're perfectly clean. But, dear, you know I feel as though I couldn't be too careful.

(*Deprecatingly.*) " Of course you aren't really hurt, and I expect you'll go away and make all kinds of fun of me—but *would* you mind just putting your finger in the listerine for a minute? (*Takes bottle of listerine from table and holds it out to guest.*)

" Oh, thank you so much. (*Coaxingly.*) Now, precious lamb, here's Aunt Mol-

lie's nice, clean finger, and we'll just put it in the babykins' 'ittly, 'ittly mouth and—there ——

(*Rapturously.*) "There, what did I tell you? Aren't you just too surprised for words? I almost fainted when I first felt it. I couldn't believe it! It didn't seem possible for a baby of his age really to have a tooth. It seemed too awfully clever or something, and I just sat there for a minute without saying a word and Jack said afterward I looked so pale he was frightened.

(*Goes into ecstatic trance, eyes fixed on baby, then comes suddenly to self.*) "Just hold up the cards one by one, won't you, dear, so that I can look at them? I don't believe he'll let me get near enough to take them in my hand. He seems so perfectly possessed to put them in his mouth ——

(*Looks at cards for a few moments with perfunctory politeness, then leans forward with something more like interest.*) "Oh, isn't that a beauty? It's just like the one you sent me, I think, but you know I was so worried about the baby when it came that I really didn't have time to notice it very much ——

" No, I don't know what was the matter with him; he just seemed to be acting so differently from the way he usually does ——

" Yes, he ate as usual. That was one thing that worried me. If he hadn't wanted to eat, I could have understood ——

" No, his temperature was normal apparently, but I was afraid my thermometer wasn't working right, and while he seemed to be sleeping properly I couldn't help feeling there was something wrong ——

" Yes, that's just what Jack said, but I'm sure he was just as much worried as I was, because he looked quite pale and called up the doctor the minute I suggested it ——

(*She has been regarding the pictures and cards with unseeing eyes, but suddenly reacts to one of the snapshots.*)

" Oh, do let me look at that photograph a minute! I believe that's the very hotel Jack and I stopped at when we were on our wedding trip. Isn't it the most wonderful thing that you should have happened to stop there too?

" Look, baby darling! Look at the

pretty picture! That's where mother and dada stopped when they were first married, years and years ago.

" Jack says he doesn't believe the baby understands me when I talk to him like that but I'm positive he does, because he looks up at me in the most intelligent way!

(*Surprised.*) " Oh, must you go, dear? I'm so disappointed! I thought of course you'd stay to luncheon. Please change your mind and stay. See, baby wants you to stay, too. See him hold out his little hands. If you only would stay we could take such a nice walk after he's had his little afternoon nap.

" Well, I'm sick with disappointment, but you will come again soon, won't you, dear? I don't feel as though I had heard anything about your trip and I was so anxious to have you tell me ——

" Well, of course, if you really have to go! But do come again soon. Baby and I don't think it's a bit nice of you to go away like this, do we, Lamby?

" Say by-by to Aunt Mollie, sweetheart! Isn't it cunning the way he waves his little hand? Good-bye, dear. Come again just as soon as you possibly can!

(*Turns away from door.*)

"Well, it does seem strange that an intelligent woman like Mollie didn't get more out of such a wonderful opportunity. She never told me a single thing about her trip, and I certainly did my best to draw her out. Didn't we, Toodlycums? Didn't we, mother's precious—didn't m-m ——" (*The remainder is lost in the back of Toodlycums' neck.*)

THE MUSIC LOVER

(MRS. GISHLEY *fondly believes herself to be a passionate lover of music. She cannot wait for the strains of the symphony to die away before she addresses the friend next her.*)

" Oh, my dear, isn't that first movement the most wonderful thing? I don't know anything else that affects me so tremendously. But then, music always affects me terribly—it almost frightens me sometimes. When I sit and listen very long I have the strangest sensation, sort of fierce and smothering. You see I have such an intense feeling for beauty in every form, music, pictures, scenery—all that sort of thing, you know.

(*Continues to applaud absently after everybody else has stopped, her eyes wandering about the auditorium. Nudges friend and lowers voice almost to a whisper.*)

" My dear, don't look around just now, but in a minute—I'll tell you when—you simply must look at Mrs. Thompson's

gown. It's a perfect scream—or rather a tragedy. Not just yet, dear. Wait a minute.

(*Cautiously.*) "Now, then, did you ever see anything so heart-breaking? It makes my flesh creep.

"Yes, I know, she's absolutely the cleverest thing there is and a perfect dear —I'm mad about her myself, you know. But the fact remains that she hasn't the intelligence of a chimpanzee when it comes to clothes.

"And speaking of clothes! (*Raises her hands and rolls up her eyes.*) If you only knew what I've been through with my new suit you wouldn't be surprised at my looking so old and haggard.

(*Deprecatingly.*) "It's perfectly sweet of you to say I'm not, but really I'm simply savage, wild, about that suit.

(*Observes that the director is back at his desk, waiting to start the next movement. Lowers her voice slightly, raising it gradually as the music gets under way.*)

"Oh, are they beginning again? Sometimes I think the waits between the numbers are too short, almost. One has scarcely time to really absorb one before

they begin another. It is almost a strain, don't you know? Of course I'm unusually sensitive to music, but I really think everyone would get more out of it, don't you know, if there was more time to let it sort of, well, penetrate. I could sit and listen forever, but I know that it's really not wise for me to do it. I feel weak and faint when I've been listening a long time. I think it must be because I'm so, don't you know, intense.

(*Raises hands high and applauds ecstatically.*)

" My dear, wasn't that the most wonderful thing? It gave me the strangest kind of creepy, haunting feeling—quite the most unusual sensation. Don't you think that young violinist is the most attractive thing you ever saw? We must applaud him hard because he looks so sort of young and unhappy.

(*Goes on applauding, her eye roving about in search of what it may devour, until her attention is called to the soloist, who is preparing to give an extra.*)

" Oh, is he going to play again? Isn't that perfectly lovely of him? But, do you know, I think sometimes they're almost too

generous with encores. It must be such a terrible strain for them to play so much.

(*Claps hands mechanically while she turns to resume her conversation.*) "My dear, I shall never, never, if I live to be a million years old, go to that tailor again. I never was so sick with disappointment as I am over that suit. And I looked forward to it so intensely, don't you know. The material was beautiful, perfectly wonderful, and I was simply expecting to love it, and what do you suppose he did? My dear ——

(*Realizing that the people in front of her are regarding her frowningly.*) "Oh, they've begun once more, haven't they? I couldn't think for a minute why that woman was glaring at me so. And I didn't know they'd begun. I make it a rule never to say a word while the music is going on.

(*Assumes position with elbow on arm of seat, chin in hand, gazing at director yearningly.*)

(*Applauding frantically.*) "Didn't you have to exercise the greatest self-control to keep from crying while they were playing that? Isn't this the most wonderful program you ever heard?

(*Rather blankly, but applauding in order not to be behind the rest of the audience in enthusiasm.*) "What! Another encore?

(*Somewhat relieved.*) "Oh, they're not, are they? Well, I suppose it is better for them not to, really, though it is perfectly heartbreakingly disappointing. I could sit and listen forever.

(*Earnestly.*) "Well, I said to him when I saw it, 'That skirt is fully an inch longer than I wanted it.' And it was! I made him measure it. I said 'I cannot think of taking it unless you alter it. It isn't at all the way I wanted it, and I must insist that you change it.'

"My dear, he refused positively to do a thing to it. He kept insisting that I had told him not to have it too short, talking in a perfectly absurd way about how I had made him change it so many times already, which was not true in the least. I leave it to you, my dear, if it wouldn't be far better for him to do it the way I wanted it than to have me go away dissatisfied.

"So I came away perfectly frantic about it, and without having the matter settled at all, because I said he would have to change it and he said he wouldn't. I

got absolutely faint over it—you know I'm so sensitive that a lack of harmony is very painful to me! And now I'll have to go back and start all over again, for I simply will not take the skirt as it is. It makes me tremble all over to think of going back there alone and facing that man.

(*Closes eyes and shudders tragically.*)

(*Leans forward and clasps friend's hand, speaking tensely.*) "My dear, you don't mean it! You couldn't possibly mean it! Nothing so beautiful could happen. You know I don't mind going there one bit if you really will go with me, but I can't believe you are in earnest. Do you suppose we will have time to run around there after the concert? Perhaps if we hurry out the minute it's over—or (*An inspiration.*) do you know—really I believe it would be better if we went now while it's all so vivid! It always seems to me if you go away while you still have that happy, yearning, intense feeling, don't you know, that it seems to mean so much more.

(*Begins thrusting arms into sleeves of coat.*) "And then if we go now we'll have time to run over and have a cup of tea and

feel fortified to beard that horrid tailor in his den.

(*Gathering up with all possible speed gloves, purse, etc., and hurrying out.*) "My dear, hasn't it been the most wonderful concert? I don't know when I've had such a perfectly tremendously splendid afternoon!"

A WILY WIDOW

(MRS. PINSKOWSKI, *at the washtub, expresses herself in regard to the recent marriage of her next door neighbor.*)

" It's just like I always said it would be. Jest give me one of them washed-out blondes for ketchin' a man every time!

" I says when her first husband was sick and her carryin' on so, ' You jest wait,' I says. ' For all she acts like she's so put out about him bein' sick, if he should take a notion to die,' I says, ' 'twouldn't be long before she married again,' I says. And never a truer word was spoke.

(*Rubbing soap vigorously on an undershirt.*)

" Nobody needed to tell me she was up to some of her tricks when she moved in that house next door to him. She was sendin' him some cookies or a pie or something every time she baked. Why, I was livin' neighbors with him and his first wife for's much's ten years and I never offered to do more'n bake a loaf of bread for him twice a week or run in and fix up the house

for him a little every day or so. But then I'm not the kind to run after men. What I done was done for charity, you might say, because I knowed his first wife and had been livin' neighbors with 'em for years.

(*Begins to rub shirt on board.*)

" How a man could want to marry her after eatin' her cookin' 's more'n I can say. But then I don't know as he wanted to marry her very much. I guess she kep' after him till he thought that was the easiest way out of it.

(*As she becomes more and more worked up over her injuries at the hands of the perfidious blonde, she forgets her washing and uses the wet garments to punctuate her remarks.*)

" Well, mebbe it's none of my business when you come right down to it. Still, when it comes to borryin' money off of a person, and her a person that has to earn her living goin' out workin' by the day, then it is my business, and I'll make it my business.

(*Gives shirt a vicious flap.*)

" Yes, that's just what she done. She come over to my house one day makin' a big to-do—you wouldn't never hardly believe it—and askin' me to lend her a dollar and sayin' how she didn't hardly know where the next one was comin' from, or something like that. I had to take my hands out the suds and go and git it fer her, and I not havin' but two dollars to my name and dependin' on gettin' more from Mrs. Sanders, who I was goin' to work for next day.

(*Puts her two fists on her hips, each one holding a sleeve of the shirt.*)

" Now, what do you s'pose she ups and buys with that dollar? Now I ask you that.

(*Lets shirt drop into tub and gesticulates with hand.*)

" She goes and buys some bargains and remnants and a longaree waist. That's what she goes and buys, whether you believe it or not. What do you know about that? A person like her goin' and buyin' longaree waists. That's the kind of thing she goes and buys with other folks' money.

And what's more, I never got that dollar back.

(*Rubs violently for a few minutes, then takes her hands from suds and stands glaring at her listener.*)

"And what do you think she said when I asked her why she didn't go out and work and get some money to pay me. She says (*Adopts a high, mimicking, falsetto tone.*), 'Why, Mrs. Pinskowski,' she says, rollin' up her eyes, 'I couldn't do such hard work,' she says. 'My husband he'd just turn over in his grave if he thought I'd be goin' out to work like that!' she says.

(*Gesticulates with both hands, while the washing waits unheeded.*)

"Yes, that's what she says, when she'd ought to of gone out doin' a good day's work and payin' me back the money she borried off me. And she goes down to the store and buys herself bargains and longaree waists and runs 'round lookin' for husbands, and she gets 'em, too. And then what do you s'pose that longaree waist was for? What do you s'pose it was for? It

was to get married in, that's what it was for!

" Yes, and they was out on the lake for a boat trip, her and him, and me workin' to pay my debts and makin' my children do their share and never thinkin' about runnin' 'round tryin' to get another husband! (*Scornfully.*) Not that I'd have him if he was to go down on both knees and beg me to. I ain't so hard up.

(*Takes another garment from the tub and slams it down on washboard. During the next speech she softens at the memory of the late* MR. PINSKOWSKI, *and wipes her eyes on the garment she is engaged upon, but cheers up at the thought of the money lying in the bank.*)

" Yes, and when it comes to speakin' about husbands, my own husband he'd feel pretty sore in his own grave if he knowed I was goin' out to wash by the day. I mind what he says to me when we was married. He says, ' Elvira Eleanora,' he says, ' you ain't never goin' outside of your own house to do a lick o' work while you're married to me,' he says. ' Maybe you can do a little wash that's took in,' he says, ' for I won't object to that,' he says, ' but

when it comes to workin' in other people's houses I won't have it,' he says.

" But I had to do it, and I done it, and that was all there was to it. And when he up and died what do you s'pose I done with the insurance money? Now what do you s'pose I done with it? Do you s'pose I took it and put up a monument over my husband, like she (*Jerking her thumb over her shoulder.*) done over her man, and bought crêpe veils and black dresses with low necks to 'em and went 'round lookin' for a husband? No, I didn't. I put my money in the bank, that's what I done with it, and there it lays now.

(*Resumes her washing, nose in air and corners of mouth drawn down. Her expression is a composite of scorn for the husband-hunting blonde, rage at the memory of the borrowed dollar and contempt for the attractions of the newly captured victim.*)

" Oh, yes, she puts up a monument over her first husband and then she goes 'round sayin' she didn't hardly have enough to eat and borryin' dollars from her neighbors to get married on.

" Yes, that's what she done. She took

my dollar that I worked hard to get and buys herself a longaree waist to get married in. The nerve of her! Buyin' her weddin' close with my money and me being acquainted with him and his first wife long before she ever heard of him! (*With hasty contempt.*) Not that I'd 'a' had him, even if he'd 'a' went down on his knees and begged me to.

(*Her expression changes from a sarcastic smile to a reminiscent simper.*) "Mr. Pinskowski, he'd be crazy mad if he thought I was goin' to get married again. Not that I'm the kind to go 'round lookin' for a husband. I ain't so crazy to get married as all that.

(*As the thought of the borrowed dollar again comes uppermost in her mind, she takes a garment from the tub and wrings it as though it were the combined neck of the nuptial pair in the adjoining house.*)

"But I tell you I'll get that dollar off of one of 'em. If I don't get it off of her, now she's married, I'll get it off of him, you bet. That's what I'll do."

(*Slaps garment down viciously, wipes hands on apron, and exits.*)

GOING TO VISIT PA'S FOLKS

(*The scene is a railway "tourist" car. The speaker, a mother traveling with a baby and three other children.*)

"Now, you Hairold, you quit your chasin' up and down the car and come and git fixed to go to bed.

"Sure, you're goin' to bed. Ain't you the rube, not to know folks go to bed in a sleepin' car? We're all goin' to bed.

"The beds is right here. Don't you see the nice colored gentleman fixin' 'em up so nice and comfortable for us to sleep in? Ain't it nice of him to fix 'em for us?

"Yes, I know they're the seats in the daytime. I never said they wasn't. They fix 'em at night for beds.

"Now, you Mabel, you quit stickin' your gum on the handle of the seat. Somebody'll rub up against and knock it off and then you won't have no gum. If you can't keep your gum in your mouth and chew it like a little lady, ma'll have to take it off of you.

"No, Hairold, I couldn't fix them beds

myself. I never said I could. No, nor your pa couldn't do it neither. The colored gentleman can, though.

" Sure, he can! He just pushes down the backs and pulls out the seats and then he puts the bedclothes on 'em.

" He keeps 'em up there on the top shelf. Didn't you see him takin' 'em down? For the land's sakes, watch him yourself! I guess you can see just as good as I can.

" Sure, that's another bed up there. Your pa and you's goin' to sleep in the one on top of this one.

" You, Mabel, take your gum right off the baby's cheek! Sure, I know it looks cute, but he don't like it and I don't know's I blame him!

" Now, Hairold, quit your hollerin'. What you hollerin' about, anyway?

" Well, it ain't goin' to come down, and anyway, if it did, you gotta sleep up there because there ain't room down here for me and the baby and Mabel and Petie and you too.

" Now, you Mabel, you keep out of that lunch basket. If you eat all them pickles to-night there won't be a one left for breakfast.

" Well, you leave 'em be, like I tell you. That's all you got a call to know about it.

" For the lands sakes, Hairold, are you hollerin' yet because you don't want to sleep up on the top shelf? You just wait till your pa gets back out of the smokin' car and he'll 'tend to you. Goodness knows why he's got to hike off that way and leave me with everything to do and all.

" Now, you Mabel, what did I tell you about that gum? You give it to me right away. You give it to me! Do you hear me? You do what I tell you right this minute! You give it to me!

" Well, all right, then. You just stick it up there on that little ledge of the winder and then leave it be. Else it'll be gettin' lost and then you won't have no gum to-morrow, and then where'll you be at?

" Well, you stick it up on the winder, then. Now, you Mabel, you take it right off the baby's cheek. What did I tell you about stickin' it on his cheek? You'll be havin' him yellin' again in a minute.

" Well, then you put it back in your mouth and chew it. You do what I tell you, anyway.

" I don't know's anybody's relations is

worth all this trouble and fuss to go and see 'em, let alone your husband's. If I'd 'a' knowed what a bother it was goin' to be, I guess I'd 'a' stayed to home. I never did hold much with visitin' your husband's folks, and when it comes to travelin' all night to do it! Well, believe me! I won't again. I'll stay right to home next time.

"Well, Hairold, if you're goin' to yell all night, I guess Mabel'll have to go up there and sleep with your pa.

"Now, Mabel, you know when I say you got to do it, you got to, and that's all there is to it.

"It don't make no difference what Hairold says. The shelf ain't goin' to come down. And, anyway, it ain't no shelf. It's a berth. It sounds silly to call it a shelf.

"Well, then, Petie'll have to do it. Petie'd love to, wouldn't you, Petie?

"Sure, he would. That's the boy. Now then, we'll get the colored gentleman to bring his ladder and you can climb up.

"Now, ain't that the cute little ladder? Now all you got to do is to run right up them little steps and hop right into bed. There ain't a thing in the world to be scared of. Now, ain't that fun? Now,

you Mabel, you git right down off that ladder! You said you wasn't goin' to sleep up there, and now you can't do it.

"For the land o' goodness sakes, you Hairold, you come right down out of there! Here you been bellerin' for the last half hour because you didn't want to sleep up there, and now you're bellerin' because you can't. Now you've pulled Petie over so's he's got to yell, too.

"For the land o' goodness sakes! I wonder if any person ever had such a contrary bunch of young ones in their lives. You just wait till your pa comes back. I'll just leave it to him to settle you and see how he likes it. I guess he won't feel quite so smart about going to visit his folks when he finds all you young ones up there all ready to sleep with him!"